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★★★★★★★

野性の闘志か完璧なテクニックか？　大観衆の見まもる日本武道館のリングで、ついに火ぶたが切られたジョー対メンドーサの世界戦！　迫力と感動のボクシング巨編、堂々の完結編！

オリジナルデザイン／水野石文
（水野プロダクション）

★★★★★★★

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TOMORROW'S JOE

Written by Asao Takamori (Kajiwara Ikki)
Drawn by Chiba Tetsuya

丹下段平に拾われてボクシング界入りをした野性児矢吹　丈は、持ち前の腕力と不屈の闘志でつぎつぎと強敵を倒し、今では東洋バンタム級チャンピオンにのしあがって無敵ぶりを発揮していた。

残るは世界の王座――。丈は世界チャンピオンとして君臨する巨人ホセ・メンドーサとの対戦に執念を燃やしていたが念願の日は来て、世紀の一戦は日本武道館で行われることになった。

しかしこのとき、丈の体は数々の激戦によって危険なパンチ・ドランカー症状にむしばまれていた。

丈に愛情を寄せる白木葉子はこれを知り、メンドーサとの試合を中止させようと必死の勧告をしたが、この試合に命を賭ける丈は葉子の忠告を斥け、決然とリングに臨むのだった……。

★前巻までのあらすじ★

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

OPEN UP!

HEY, JOE!

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

WHAT'RE YOU DOING? OPEN UP, JOE!

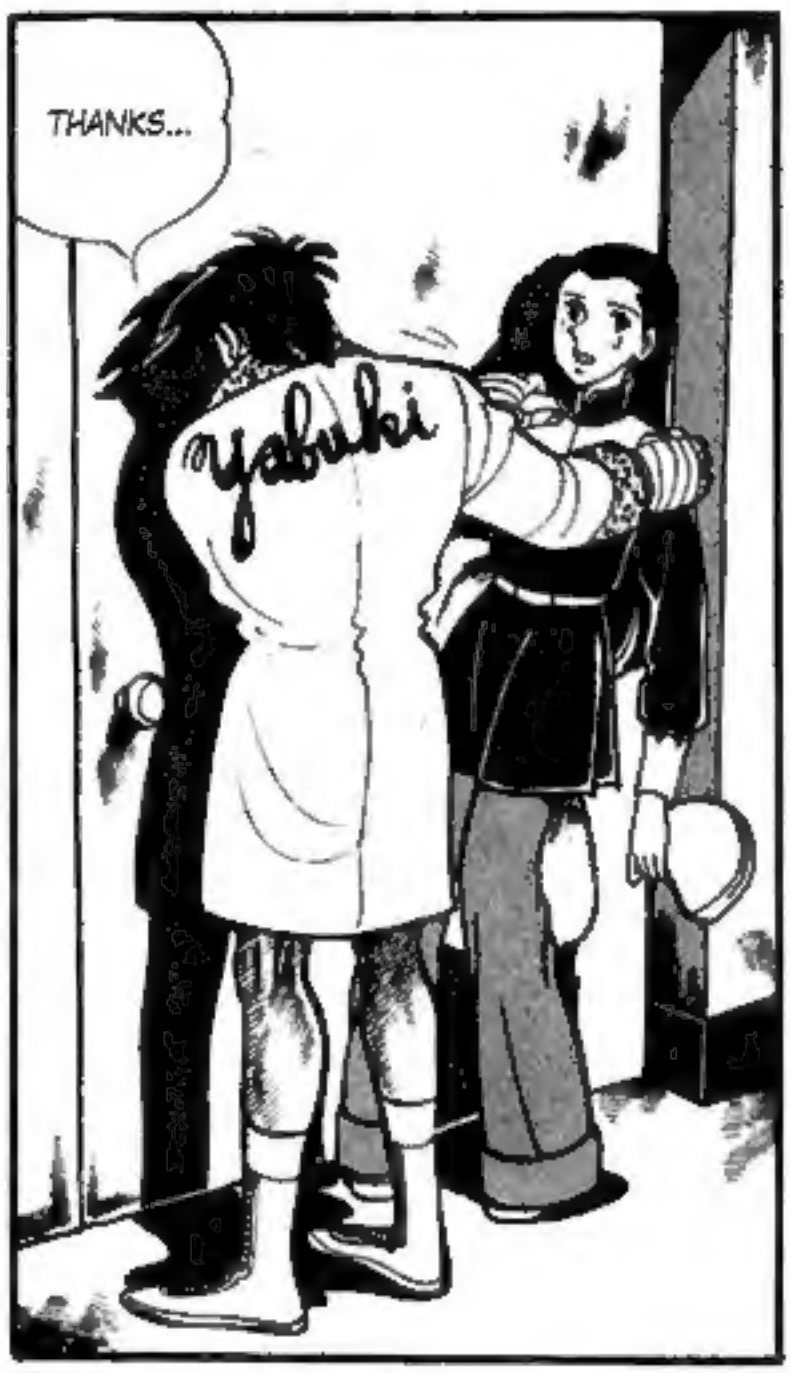
IT'S TIME TO GO!

THAT'S WHY... I'VE GOTTA GO.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST MAN, JOSÉ MENDOZA, IS WAITING FOR ME ON THAT RING.

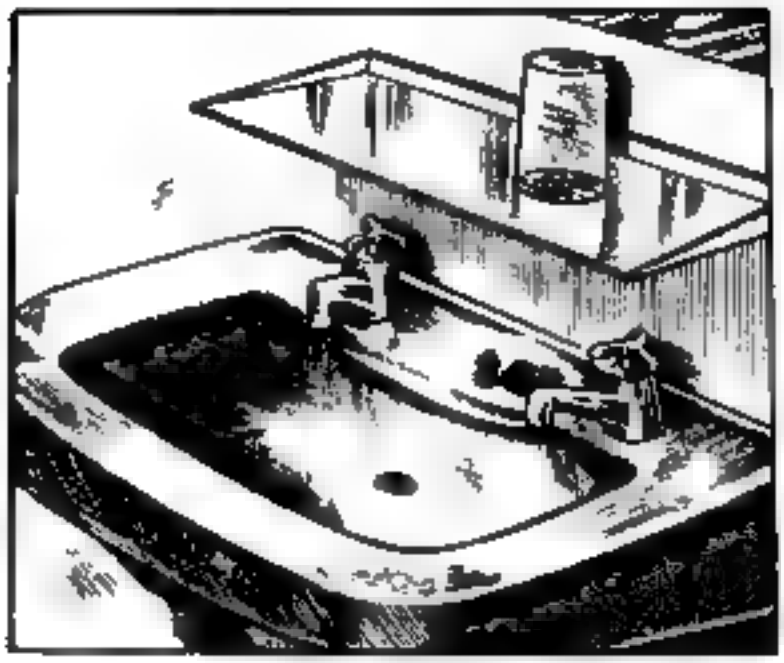
YABUKI...!

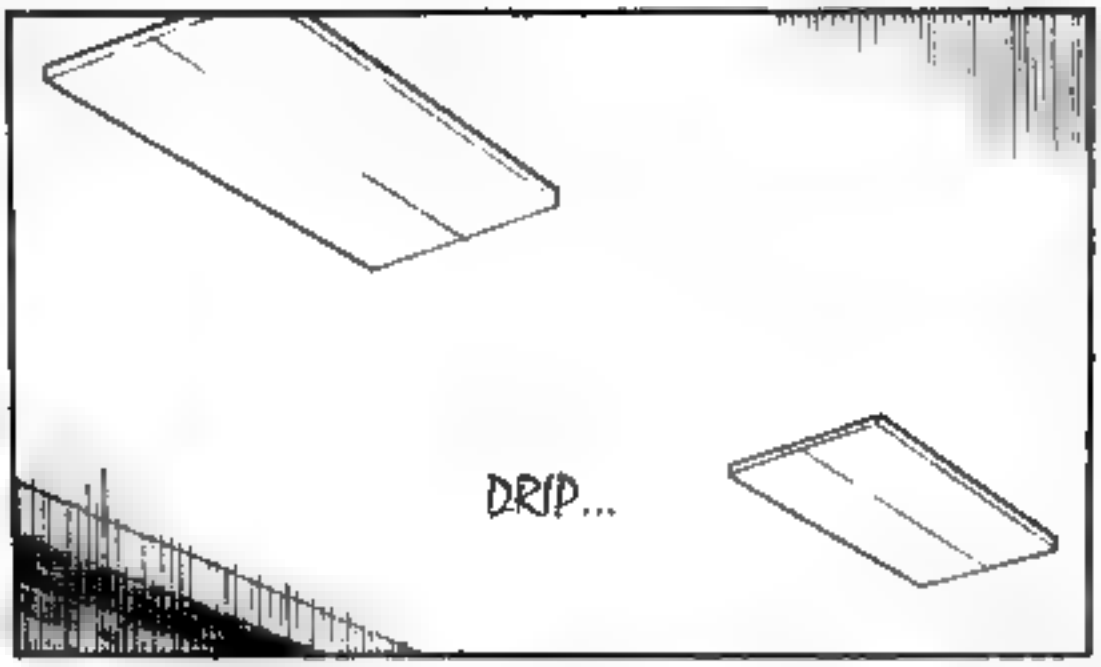
WHAT'RE YOU DOING IN THERE? IS THERE SOMEONE INSIDE?


THANKS...
Yabuki

YABUKI...

NO...
LET'S GO.

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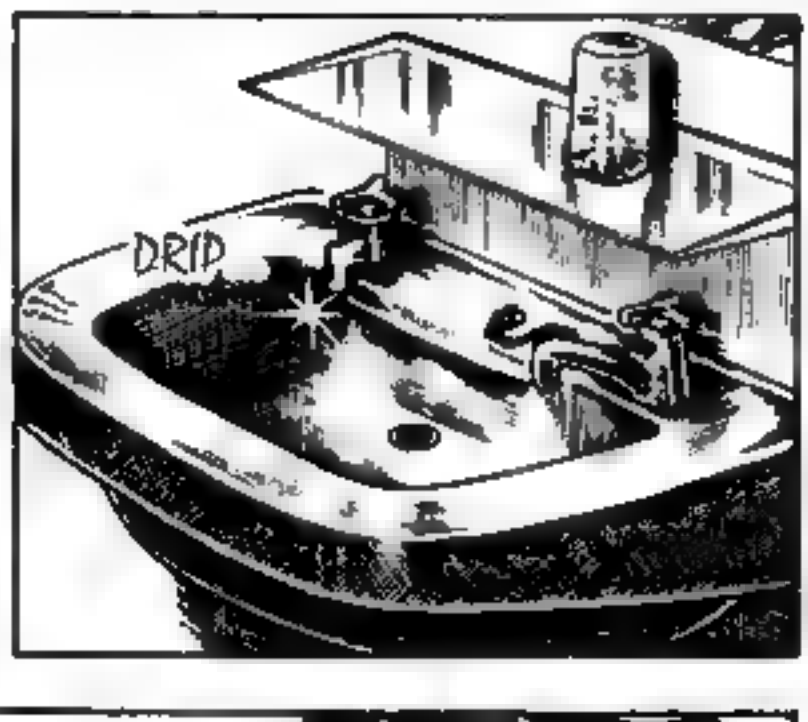
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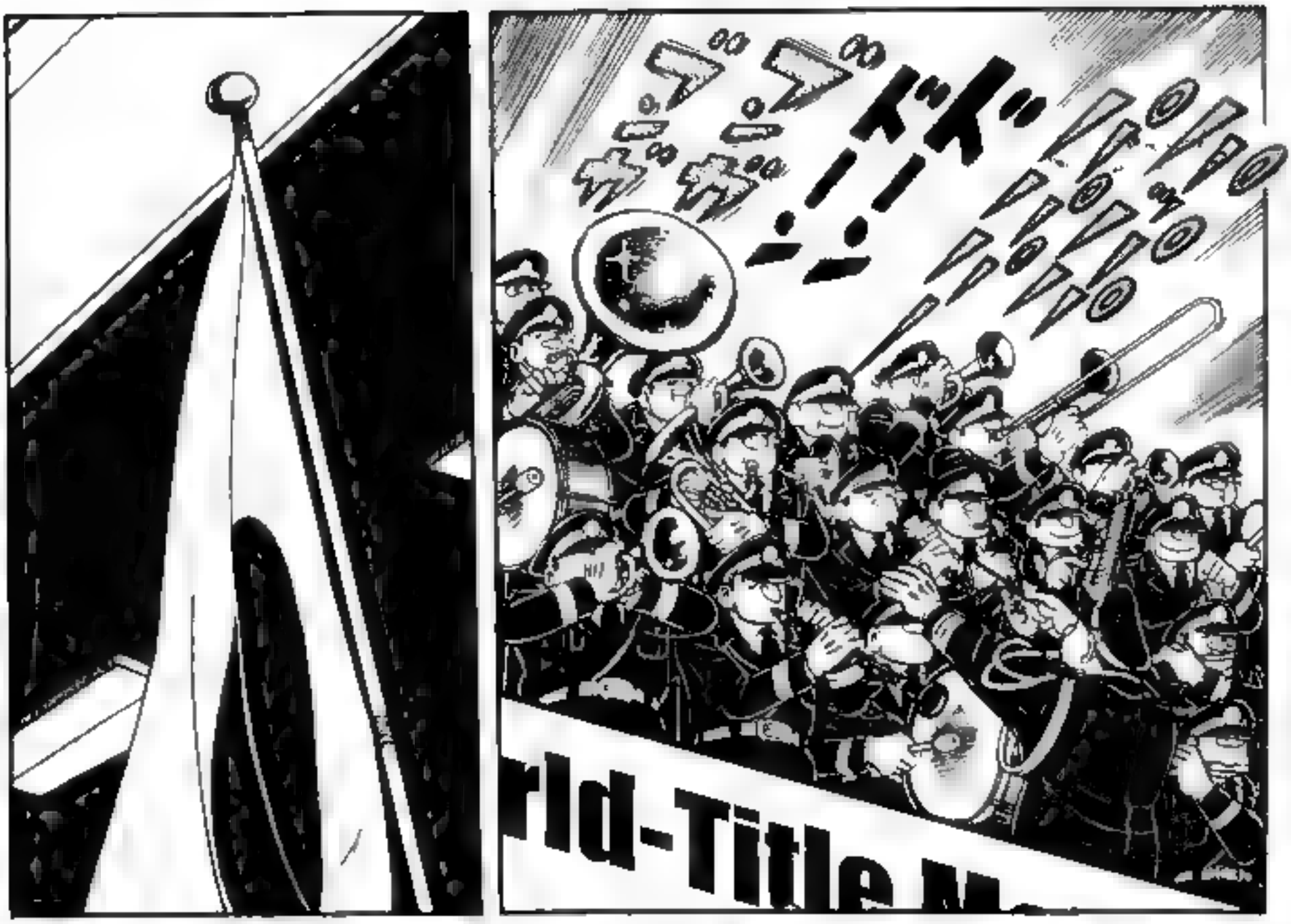

rld-Title

LEADING AHEAD OF HIM AND HIS SECONDS IS THE JAPANESE FLAG!

AHH! AND HERE COMES TONIGHT'S CHALLENGER, YABUKI JOE, WALKING FORTH FROM THE EASTERN HALL!

SUNTORY

YOU CAN DO IT JOE!

TAKE THAT BELT!

IT'S YOUR TIME, JOE!

HAIL THE NEW CHAMP!

丹矢

Yaby

I DON'T CARE IF HE'S A FIGHTING COMPUTER, MACHINE, OR WHATEVER! DESTROY HIM WITH YOUR PURE BRAWLIN' SKILLS!

GET THAT WORLD-TITLE NO MATTER WHAT!

YA-BU-KI! YA-BU-KI! YA-BU-KI!

THE CHAMPION, TOO, NOW MAKES HIS ENTRANCE!
HE'S ALSO LED TO THE RING BY THE FLAG OF HIS NATION, MEXICO!

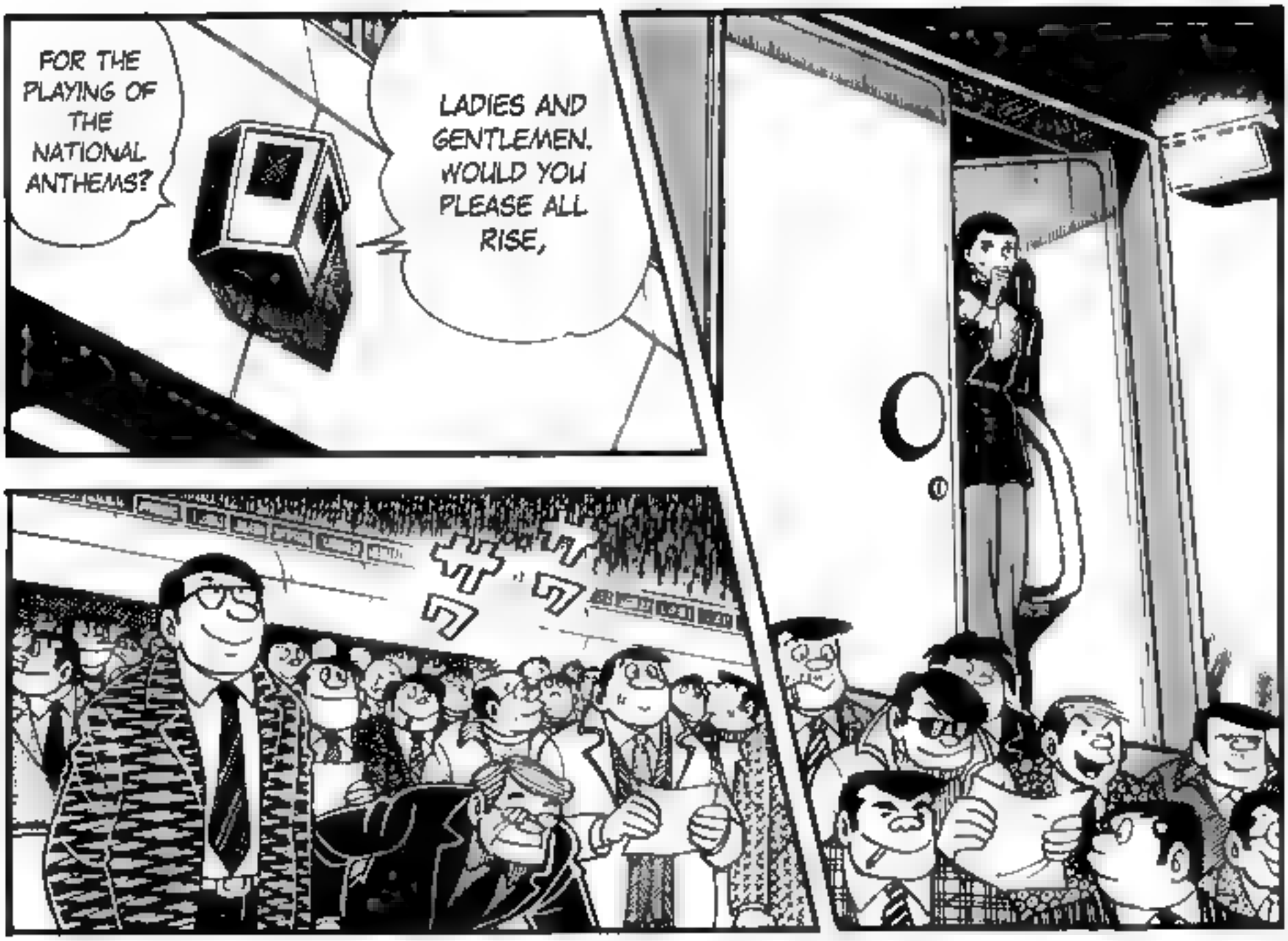
HE IS THE KING OF KINGS, THE CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS! HE IS JOSÉ MENDOZA!

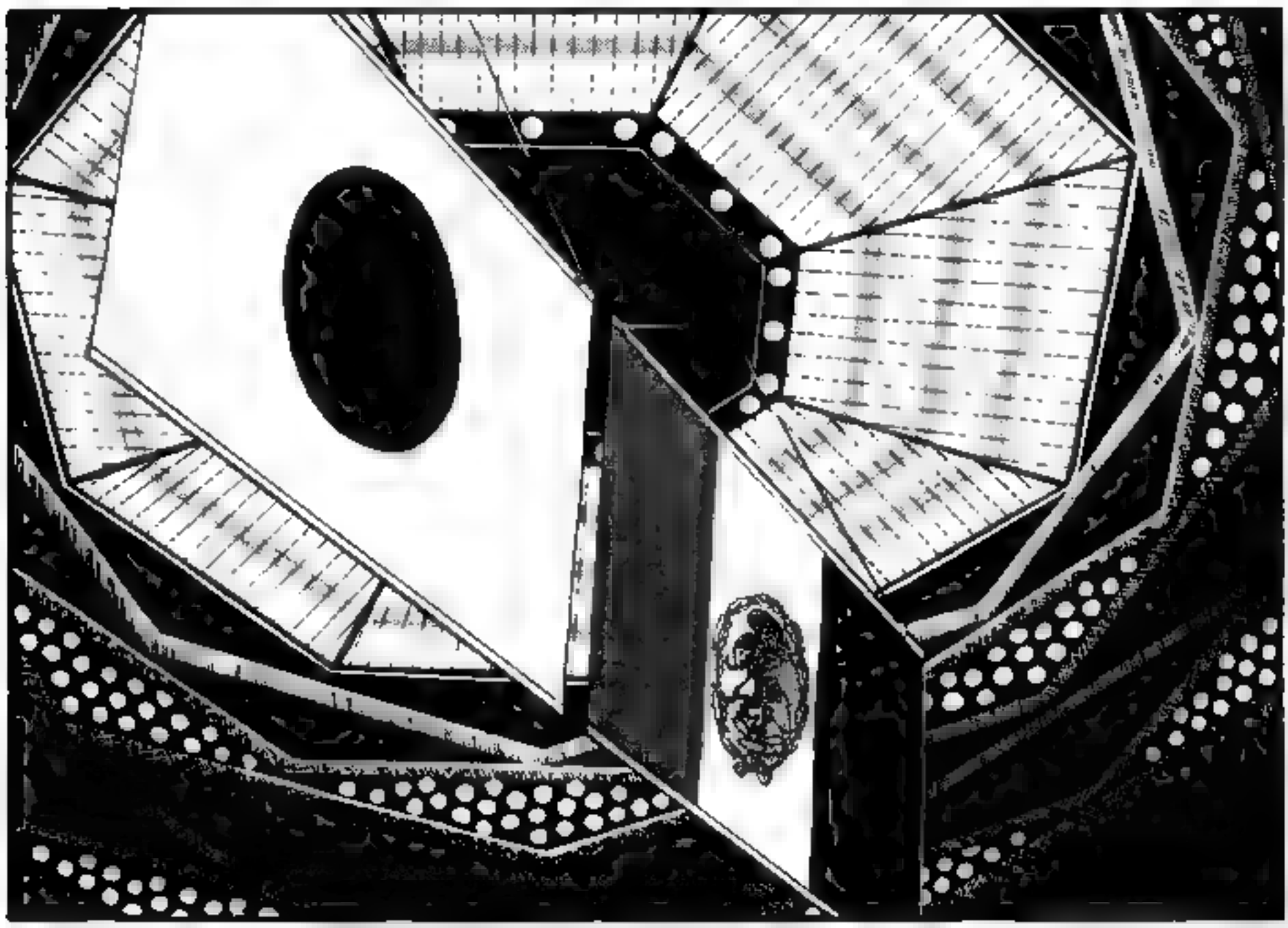
BUT HAS SHE EVER WELCOMED SUCH A COMPLETE, AND DOMINANT CHAMPION BEFORE!?

JAPAN HAS SEEN MANY WORLD CHAMPIONS AND HOSTED A NUMBER OF THEIR MATCHES OVER THE YEARS,

HE STRUTS FORWARD CONFIDENTLY WHILE RESPONDING TO THE CROWD'S ENTHUSIASTIC WELCOME! THERE'S A CERTAIN DIGNITY IN HIS STRIDE!

BOTH PLAYERS ARE NOW PRESENTED WITH BOUQUETS OF FLOWERS.


FOR THE PLAYING OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEMS?
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. WOULD YOU PLEASE ALL RISE,



LISTENING TO THE NATIONAL ANTHEM PLAYED BY THE POLICE BAND, WHOSE MEMBERS USED TO CHASE HIM AROUND...
WOULD NOW BE STANDING HERE,

THE HOOLIGAN WHO STARTED HIS TRAINING IN JUVIE,
TO THINK... THAT THE PUNK I FOUND IN THE DIRTY ALLEYS...

AS THE BOXING COMMISSIONER OF JAPAN, I CERTIFY AND ACKNOWLEDGE THIS TO BE AN OFFICIAL BANTAMWEIGHT WORLD-TITLE MATCH.

AND NOW AN ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE COMMISSIONER!

THE MEXICAN-MADE GLOVES ARE LIGHTER AND HAVE LESS LEATHER CONTENT THAN REGULAR GLOVES, GIVING IT A REPUTATION FOR A MORE RAW AND UNADULTERATED FIGHT, AS IF BLOWS ARE DELIVERED WITH THE NAKED FIST.
TVK
TVK
AS PER THE REQUEST FROM THE CHAMPION'S SIDE, THE GLOVES USED TONIGHT ARE MADE IN MEXICO.

THE GLOVES HAD BEEN SAFELY KEPT IN THEIR ORIGINAL BOXES BY THE COMISSIONER UNTIL NOW... THE GLOVES ARE PRESENTED TO THE CHIEF SECOND OF BOTH CORNERS.

YOU CAN CLEARLY TELL HIS CORNER WANTS TO END THIS FIGHT,

AS SOON AS POSSIBLE... IN THE FIRST HALF, IDEALLY

MEXCIAN-MADE GLOVES FOR LIKELIER KOs, HUH...

MENDOZA'S ALREADY BARING HIS FANGS, JOE.

DID YOU GET THAT, JOE?

WELL?

THAT MEANS YOU SHOULD TRY TO PRESERVE YOUR STAMINA IN ORDER TO TIP THE SCALES IN THE SECOND HALF.

JOSÉ MENDOZA OF MEXICO!

STANDING AT 118LBS, IS THE CURRENT BANTAMWEIGHT WORLD CHAMPION...

IN THE RED CORNER,

THE CURRENTLY RANKED 4TH BANTAM-WEIGHT IN THE WORLD...

IN THE BLUE CORNER, STANDING AT 117 AND A QUARTER POUNDS,

YABUKI JOE OF JAPAAAAN!

BEING TOO EAGER AND AGGRESSIVE WILL BE FUTILE AGAINST MENDOZA'S PERFECT TECHNIQUES.

WHAT'LL BE KEY FOR HIM IN TONIGHT'S MATCH IS TO LET HIS WILDNESS AND SOLID INTUITION STEADILY GUIDE HIM.

YES. IF MENDOZA IS THE PERFECT BOXER, THEN YABUKI TOO, IS THE PERFECT BEAST OF NATURE.

HAHA... HOW VERY MUCH LIKE YABUKI'S USUAL COCKINESS FOR HIM TO BE COMPLETELY UNAFFECTED BY THE TENSE ATMOSPHERE TONIGHT.

SECONDS OUT OF THE RING!

OUR STRATEGY'S TO BET ON THAT IRON-CLAD PRINCIPLE!

NO MATTER HOW PERFECT THE TECHNIQUE, THERE'S ALWAYS AN OPENING WHEN A BOXER COMMITS TO THE OFFENSIVE!

I KNOW IT MIGHT BE FRUSTRATING, BUT DO YOUR BEST TO PRESERVE YOUR STAMINA AND WAIT FOR YOUR OPPONENT TO STRIKE!

G-GOT IT, JOE?

AGHHH-

AHHHH!

THE MATCH HAS BEGUN!

THE BELL NOW RINGS FOR THE 15-ROUND MATCH OF THE CENTURY!

HE RUSHES OVER TO MENDOZA'S CORNER AS SOON AS THE BELL RINGS!

A-AN UNEXPECTED START! TRULY, YABUKI LIVES UP TO HIS REPUTATION FOR UNPREDICT-ABILITY!

DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME TELL YOU OVER AND OVER AGAIN TO CONSERVE YOUR STRENGTH AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE!?

N-NO, YOU IDIOT!

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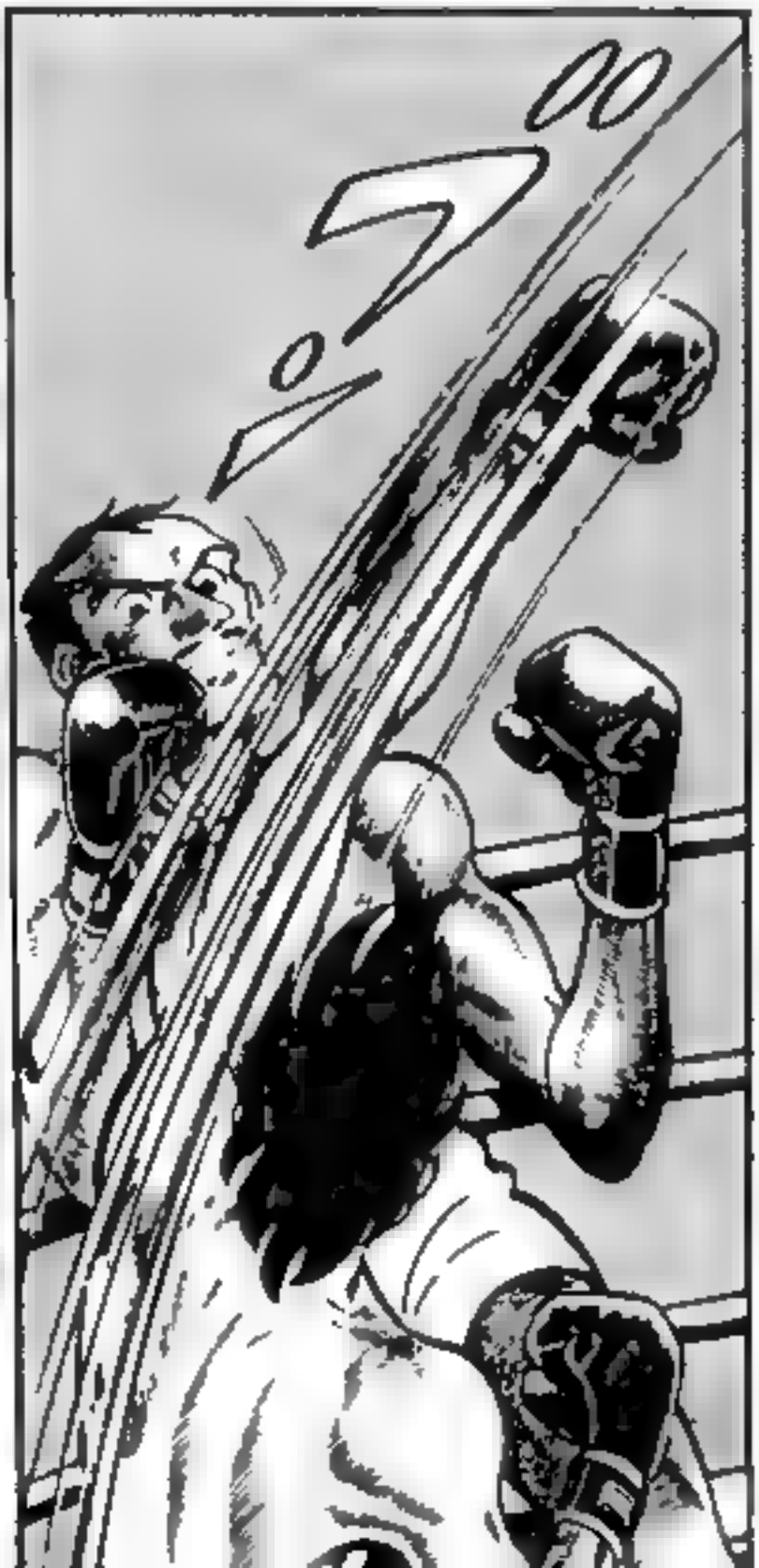

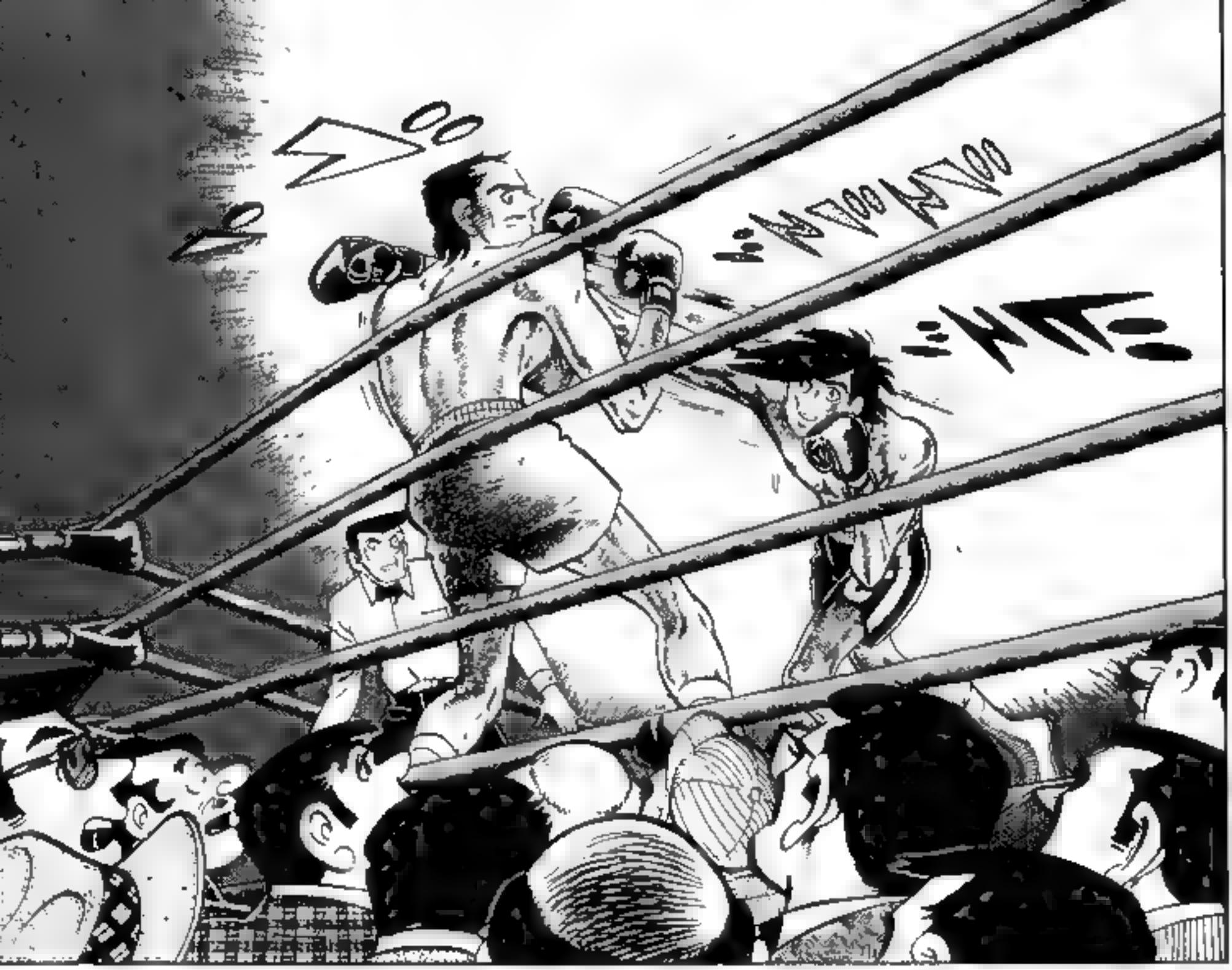
ONE MORE!
ONE MORE!
ONE MORE!

ATTA BOY, YABUKI!
KEEP'EM PUNCHES COMIN'!

WHAT A FIERCE RUSH THIS IS!
YABUKI THROWS A PUNCH! ANOTHER! AND ANOTHER!

....

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I FEAR YABUKI'S WILDNESS MAY HAVE GOTTEN THE BETTER OF HIM...

HM...

W-WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS INITIAL RUSH?

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF MENDOZA DODGES OR BLOCKS, YABUKI WILL NOT STOP!

HE'S STILL ATTACKING!

OR AGAINST THOSE WHO MAY BE FEELING NERVOUS AT THE START.

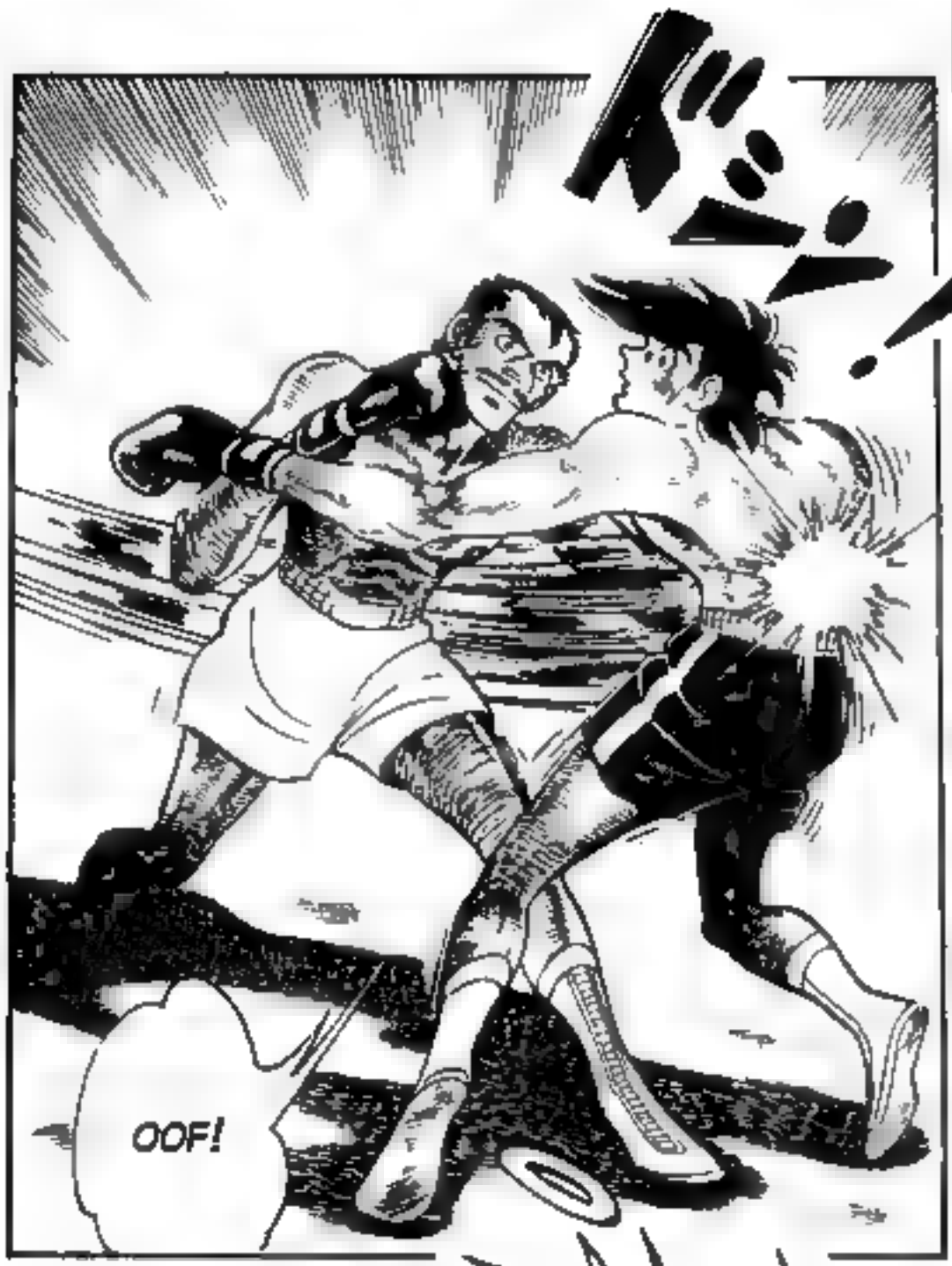
A SURPRISE RUSH AT THE START OF A ROUND IS ONLY EFFECTIVE AGAINST OPPONENTS WHO HAVE SOME SORT OF CRITICAL FLAW IN THEIR OFFENSE OR DEFENCE...

HE'S DRIVEN THE CHAMPION TO THE ROPES AND IS NOW THROWING A FLURRY OF RIGHT AND LEFT HOOKS!

JUST LOOK. MENDOZA IS NOT MISSING A BEAT IN BLOCKING AND DODGING ALL OF YABUKI'S PUNCHES!

I FEAR YABUKI IS ONLY HASTENING HIS FATIGUE.

BUT IT IS ENTIRELY INEFFECTIVE AGAINST A MAN LIKE MENDOZA, WHO POSSESSES TECHNIQUE, POWER, AND EXPERIENCE.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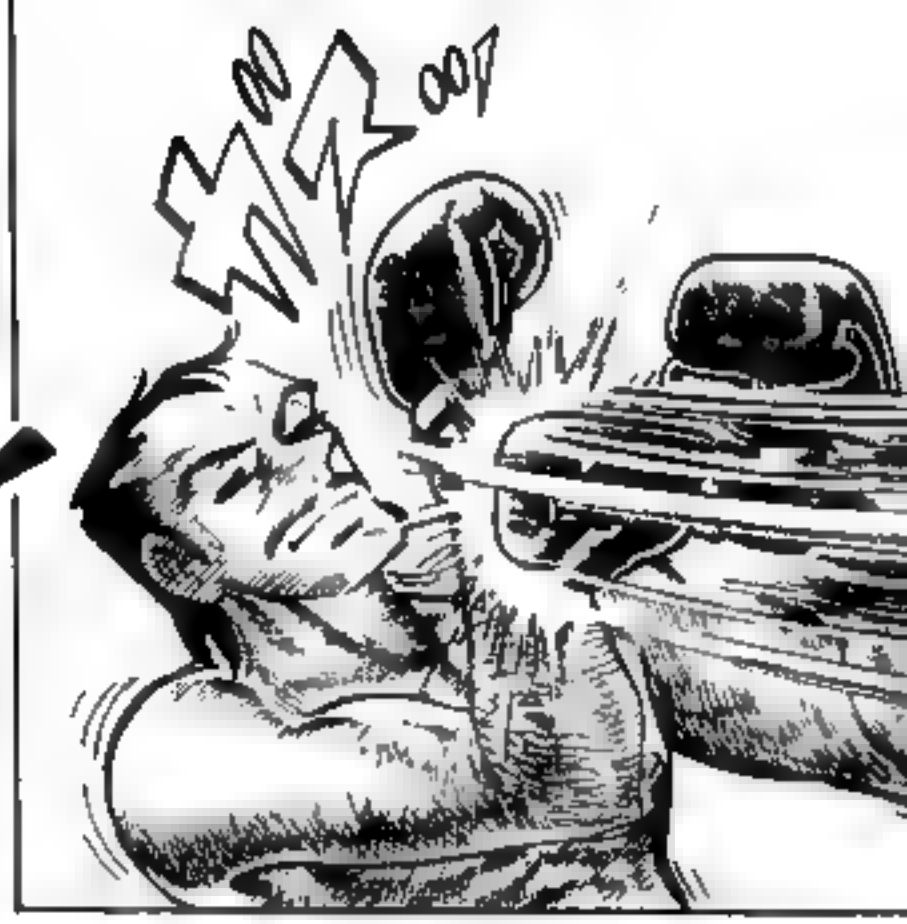
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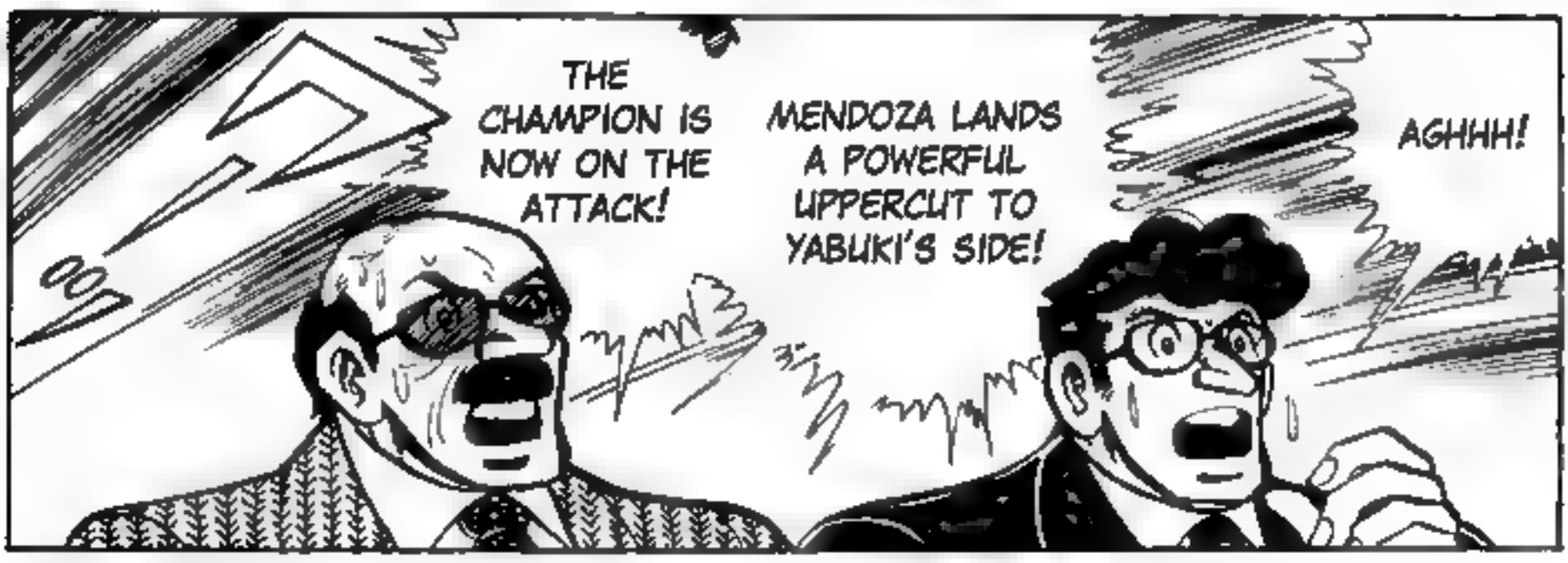
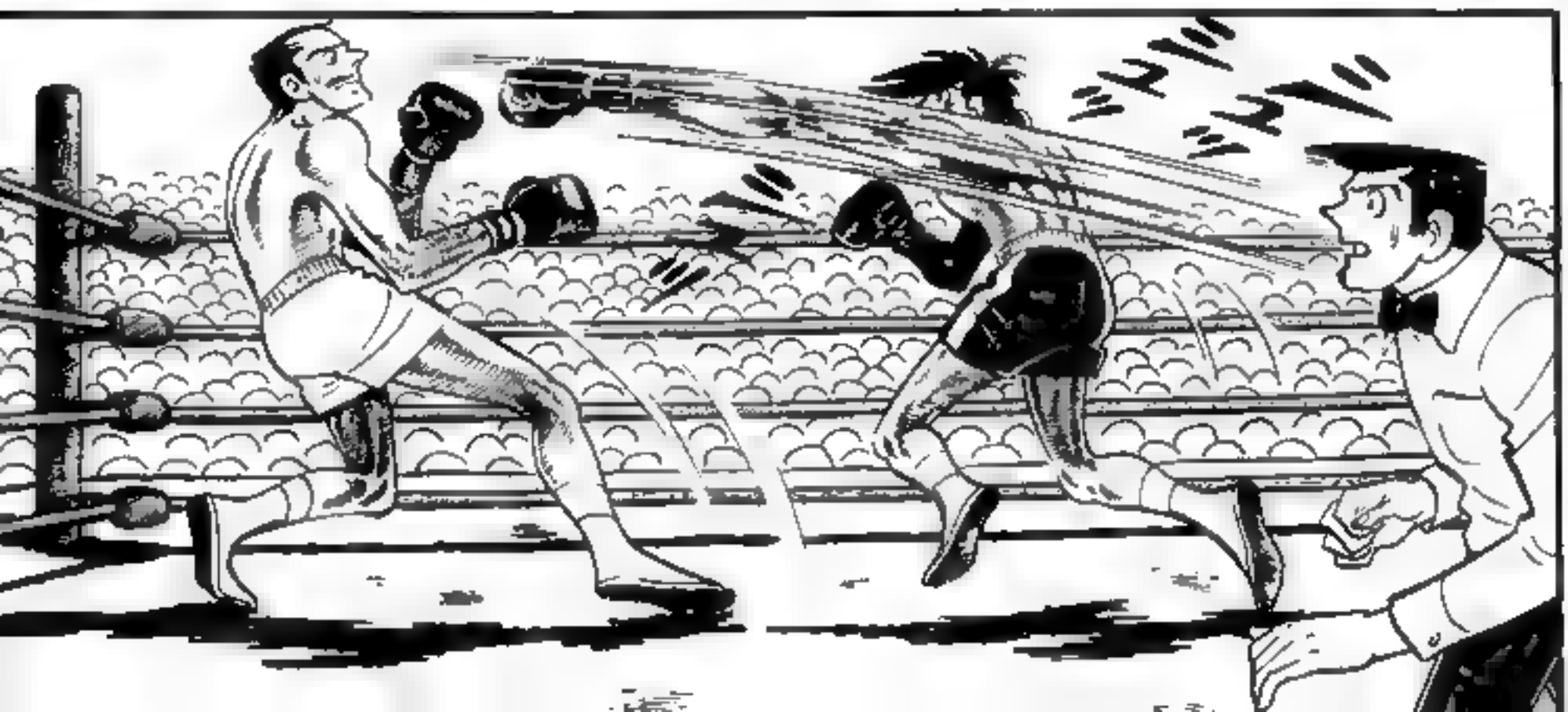

THE CHAMPION IS NOW ON THE ATTACK!
MENDOZA LANDS A POWERFUL UPPERCUT TO YABUKI'S SIDE!
AGHHH!



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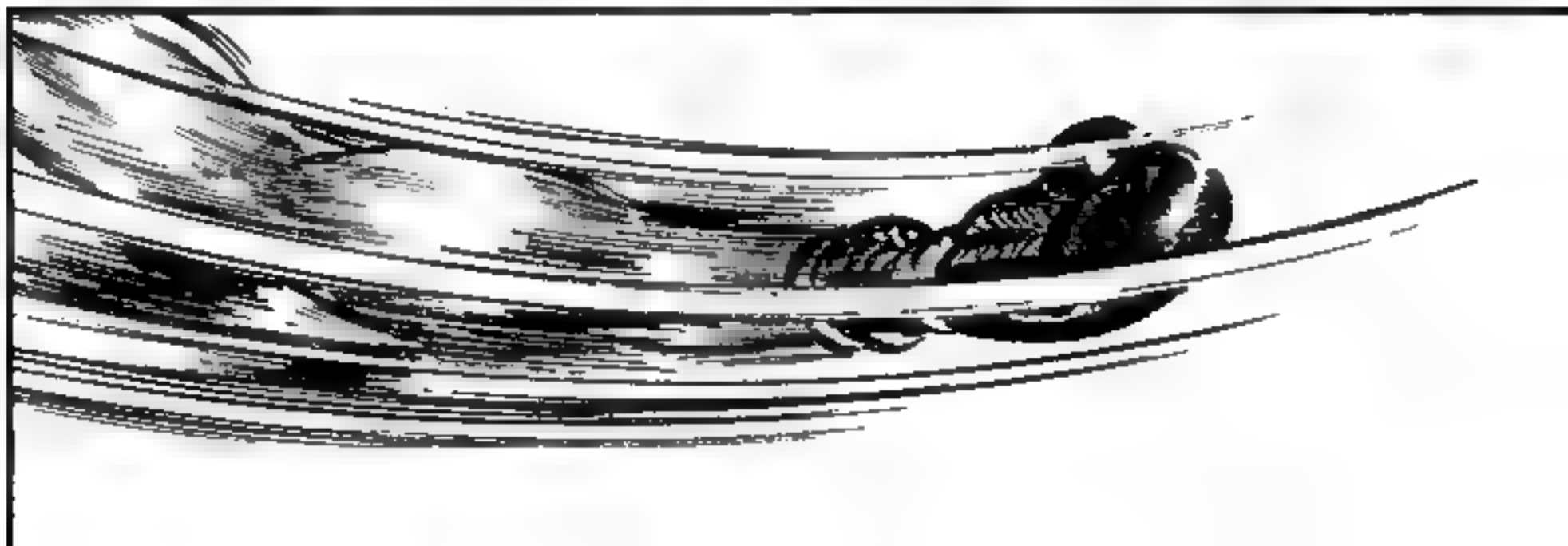

UGH...

DING!
THAT'S THE BELL!
S-STOP!

I SAID THAT'S THE BELL! ARE YOU DEAF!?

WHOA...

AHH...

NOW RETURN TO YOUR CORNER!

J-JOE...!

I REALLY CAN'T FIGURE HIM OUT.. IT'S A 15-ROUND WORLD-TITLE MATCH AND YET HE'S FIGHTING AS IF THIS WAS THE VERY LAST ROUND..!

YABUKI WAS ABSENT-MINDEDLY PUNCHING AWAY WITHOUT PAYING EVEN THE SLIGHTEST ATTENTION TO THE BELL JUST NOW, WASN'T HE?

I GUESS EVEN YOUR NERVES ARE AFFECTED BY THE PRESSURES OF A WORLD-TITLE MATCH.

I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU HAD NERVES OF STEEL, BUT...

JOE...

DO YOU HAVE *ANY IDEA* WHO YOU'RE FIGHTING RIGHT NOW!?

PRESSING EARLY LIKE THAT ONLY WORKS FOR OPPONENTS YOU CAN INTIMIDATE AND TIP OVER IN ONE STRONG PUSH! OPPONENTS BENEATH YOUR LEVEL!

...YOU GET ME?

BUT IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO SWITCH STRATEGIES. IF YOU DON'T START CONSERVING YOUR STAMINA, THIS MATCH IS GONNA GET UGLY.

丹下ジム

"!

JOE...?

丹下ジム

MOUTH GUARD.

H-HERE.

DID YOU LISTEN TO WHAT I SAID, JOE..?

DING!

I... I'M BEGGIN' YA, JOE. YOU'VE GOTTA-

STEP OUT. THAT'S THE BELL.

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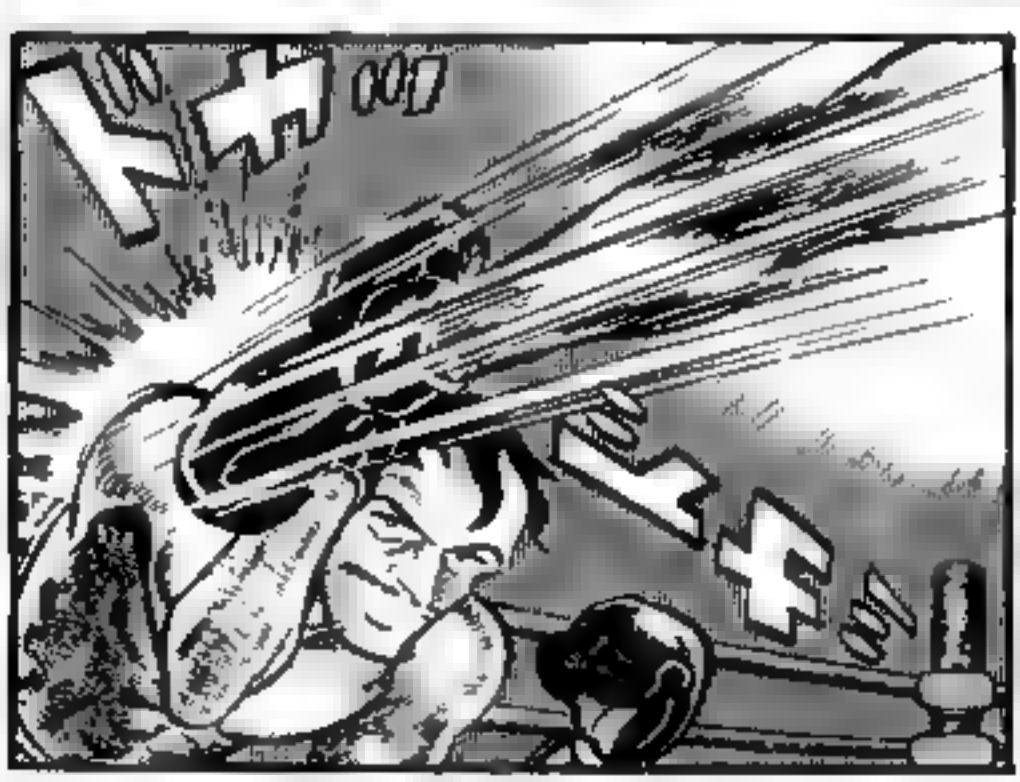
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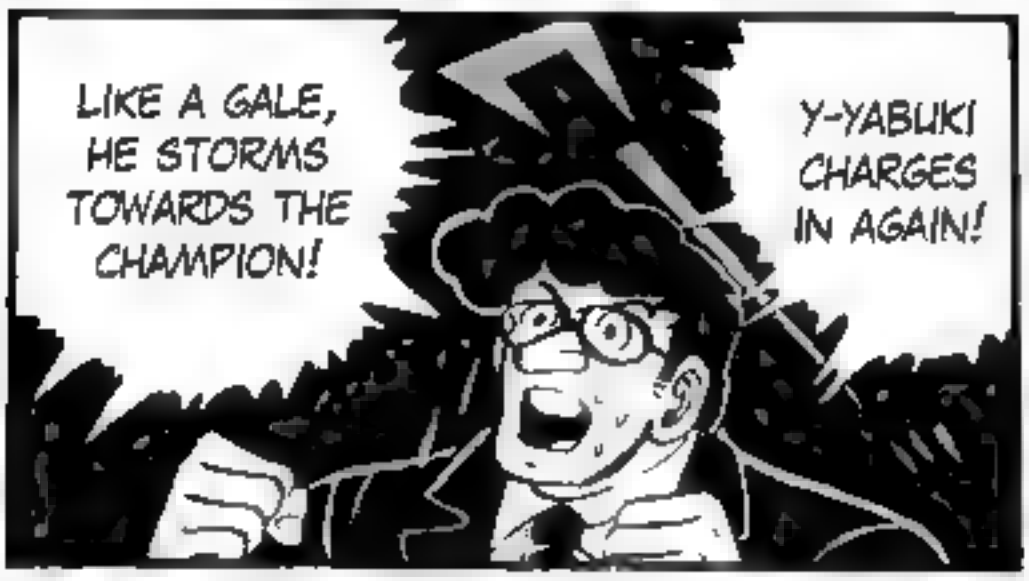

LIKE A GALE, HE STORMS TOWARDS THE CHAMPION!
Y-YABUKI CHARGES IN AGAIN!

AGH...

HE THROWS A PUNCH! AND ANOTHER!

RELENT-LESSLY AND RECKLESSLY! HE ATTACKS AND ATTACKS!

OH GOD, NO...

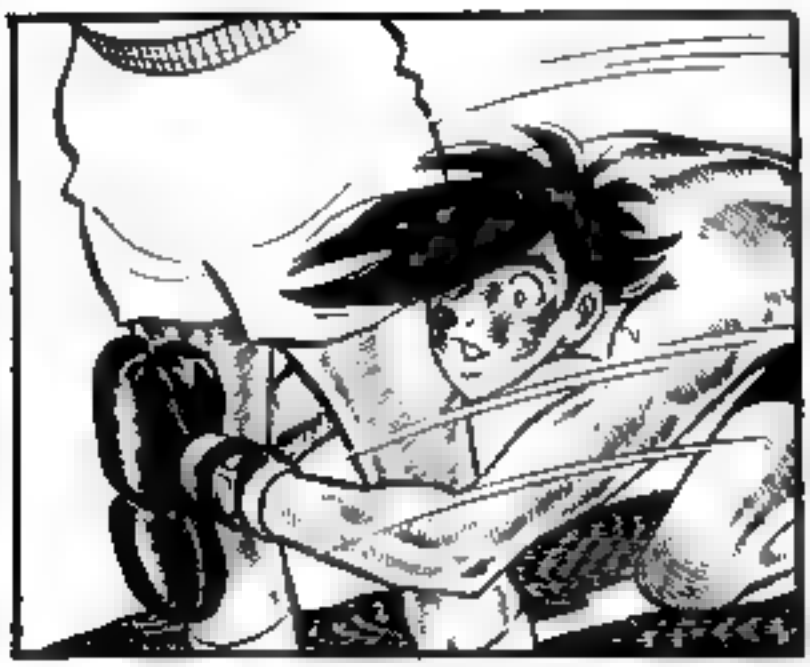
THIS IS GETTIN' TENSE!
THEY'RE BOTH THROWING HITS!
AHH! THE CHAMP COUNTERED!

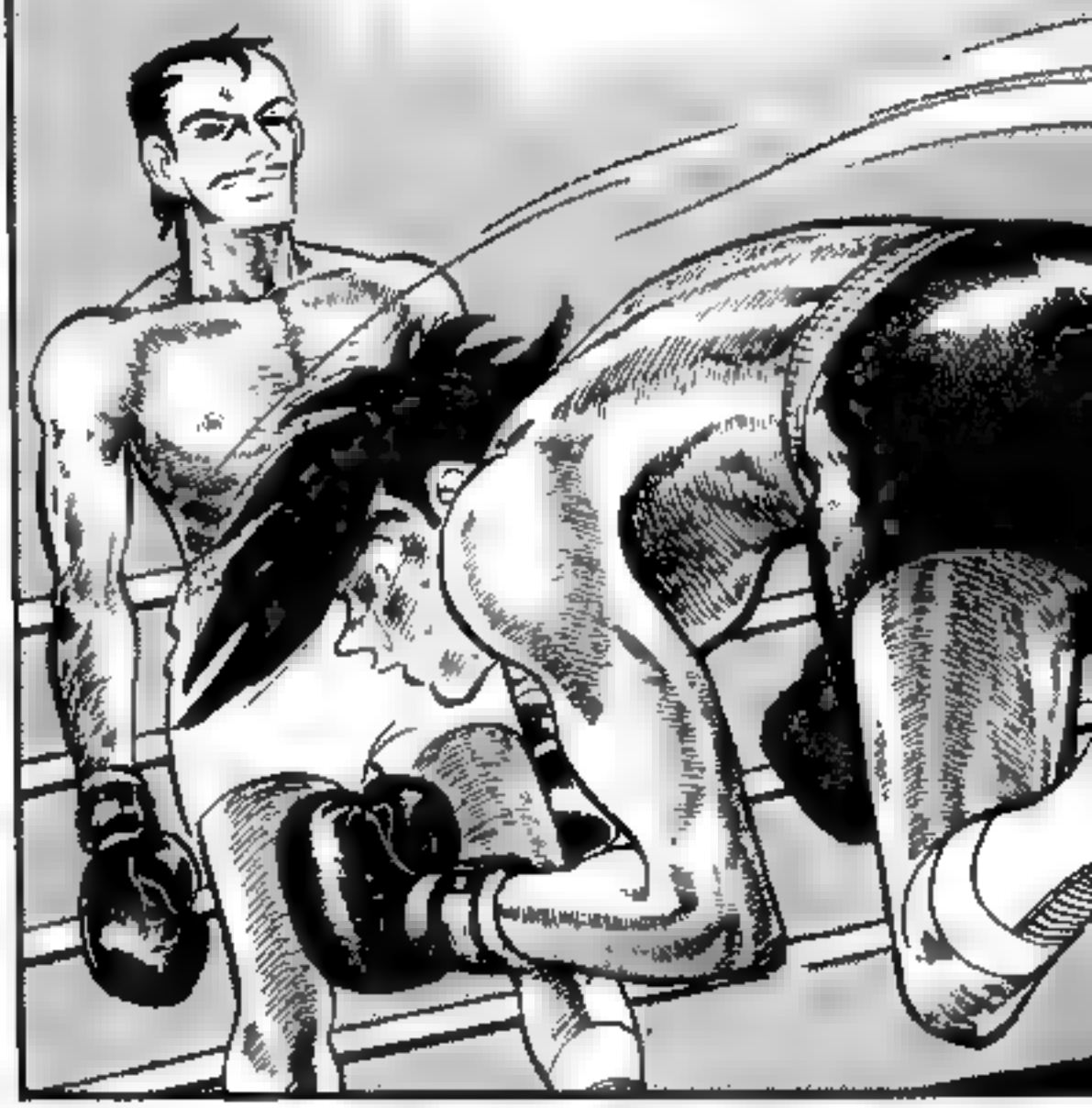
UGH..

WOOO

HE'S DOWNED EARLY IN ROUND 2!

YABUKI GOES DOWN!





YABUKI CLINGS TO THE CHAMPION'S LEGS AND JUST BARELY AVOIDS A DOWN!
N-NO, WAIT!

DESPITE ALMOST FALLING OVER, YABUKI MANAGES TO CLING ONTO THE CHAMPION AND CONTINUE THROWING PUNCHES!

AND HE ATTACKS AGAIN!

NGH!

BUT EACH ONE OF HIS PUNCHES ARE CAREFULLY AIMED TO DELIVER TREMENDOUS DAMAGE...

THE CHAMPION MIGHT SEEM AS IF HE'S ONLY CASUALLY RESPONDING TO YABUKI'S ATTACKS,

PARDON?

A... A CORK-SCREW PUNCH...

BUT EVEN SO, YABUKI STILL DOES NOT STOP HIS ATTACKS!

HUFF

HE CONTINUES TO WILDLY SWING AT MENDOZA!

AH YES, YOU MEAN THE TWIST HE ADDS FOR HIS ADVANCED CORK-SCREW PUNCHES, CORRECT!?

HUFF

HUFF

YES... THEY'RE GOING TO LEAVE AN IMPACT, THAT'S FOR SURE.

HUH?

AHH! YABUKI'S LEGS ARE GIVING IN!

Y... YES... HE'S JUST BARELY MANAGING TO STAND...

AH! HE MANAGES TO FALL BACK ON THE ROPES AND REGAIN HIS FOOTING, BUT...

YABUKI'S IN A DESPERATE SITUATION!

THIS IS THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO!

KO

AGHHHHH!

UH..

ミュ〃〃

ビュ〃〃

JOE YABUKI...

EVEN I COULD TAKE ON YABUKI IF HE FIGHTS THE WAY HE'S FIGHTING NOW...

GOD, THIS IS FRUSTRATING TO WATCH...

THIS AIN'T A KID'S FIGHT SO STOP REPEATING SUCH OBVIOUS LOW-LEVEL TACTICS!

OH C'MON! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING OUT THERE, YABUKI!?

USE SOME FOOTWORK OR FEINTS TO MAKE AN OPENING FIRST, YOU DUMBASS!

C'MON, YABUKI!

YOU AIN'T FIGHTIN' LIKE YOUR USUAL SELF!

GET A GRIP, YABUKI!!!!

STOP!

THAT'S THE END OF ROUND 2!

Y-YABUKI...

.....

BUT YABUKI DID MANAGE TO EARN A POINT BY RELENTLESSLY ATTACKING, FUTILE AS IT WAS...

TO BE HONEST, THE ROUND WAS ONE-SIDED ENOUGH TO EVEN BE A 5-2,

ENDED 5-3 IN FAVOUR OF THE CHAMPION.

ROUND 2 JUST NOW,

GET ME VASELIN AND A WET TOWEL!
HEY!

YABUKI'S EFFORTS WERE ALL IN VAIN AS NONE OF HIS PUNCHES WERE ABLE TO FIND THEIR MARK PAST THE CHAMPION'S GUARD.
AT A GLANCE, THE ROUND MIGHT SEEM EVEN, WITH BOTH PLAYERS EXCHANGING BLOWS, BUT THE TRUTH IS FAR FROM IT...
HIS PROSPECTS ARE GETTING DIMMER AND DIMMER.

AGHH!
WINCE

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YA, JOE..
WHAT...

U... UGHH...

IT'S SUICIDAL TO KEEP GOING LIKE THIS.

YOU'VE USED UP MOST OF YOUR STAMINA WITHOUT ACHIEVING ANYTHING,

THIS IS THE WORST CASE SCENARIO.

WHILE MENDOZA'S MANAGED TO RACK UP THE DAMAGE ON YOU WITH A FEW CAREFULLY AIMED PUNCHES...

LISTEN TO ME!

WHAT KIND OF BOXER IGNORES EVERY DAMN ADVICE FROM HIS SECOND!?

ARE YOU LISTENING, JOE...?

T... TAKE IT EASY..?

LET'S TAKE IT EASY..

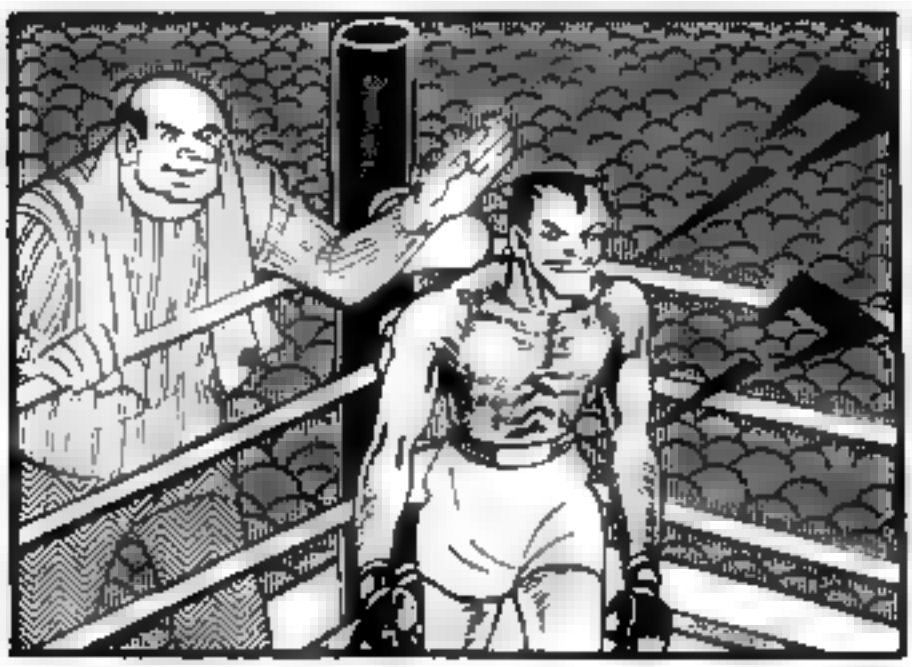
DON'T SHOUT, OLD MAN...

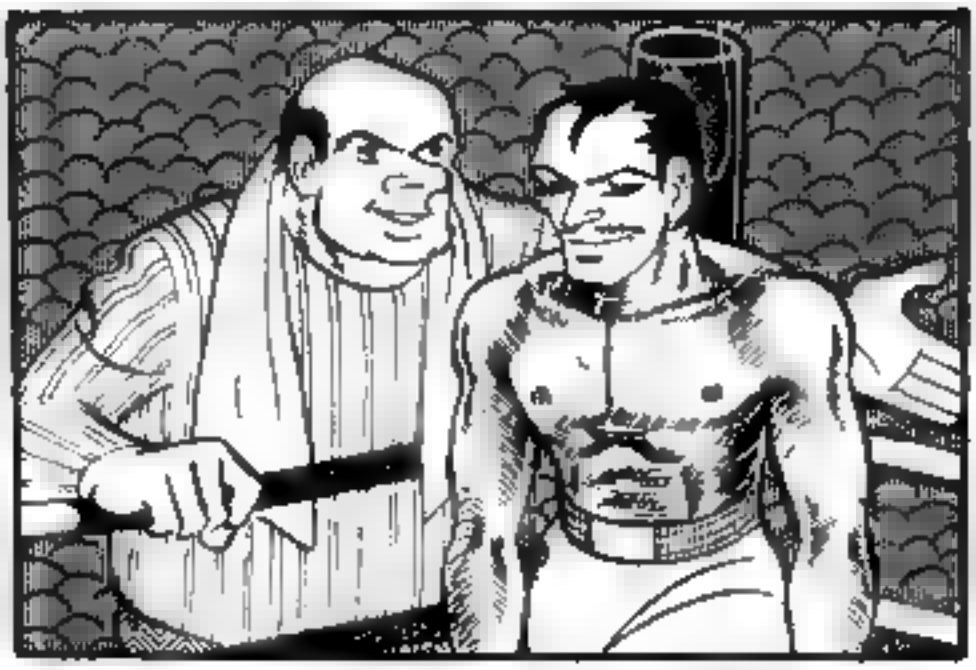
THIS...

W... WHAT A SPIRITLESS FACE...

THIS IS MY FIRST TIME SEEING JOE LIKE THIS ON THE RING...

DING!





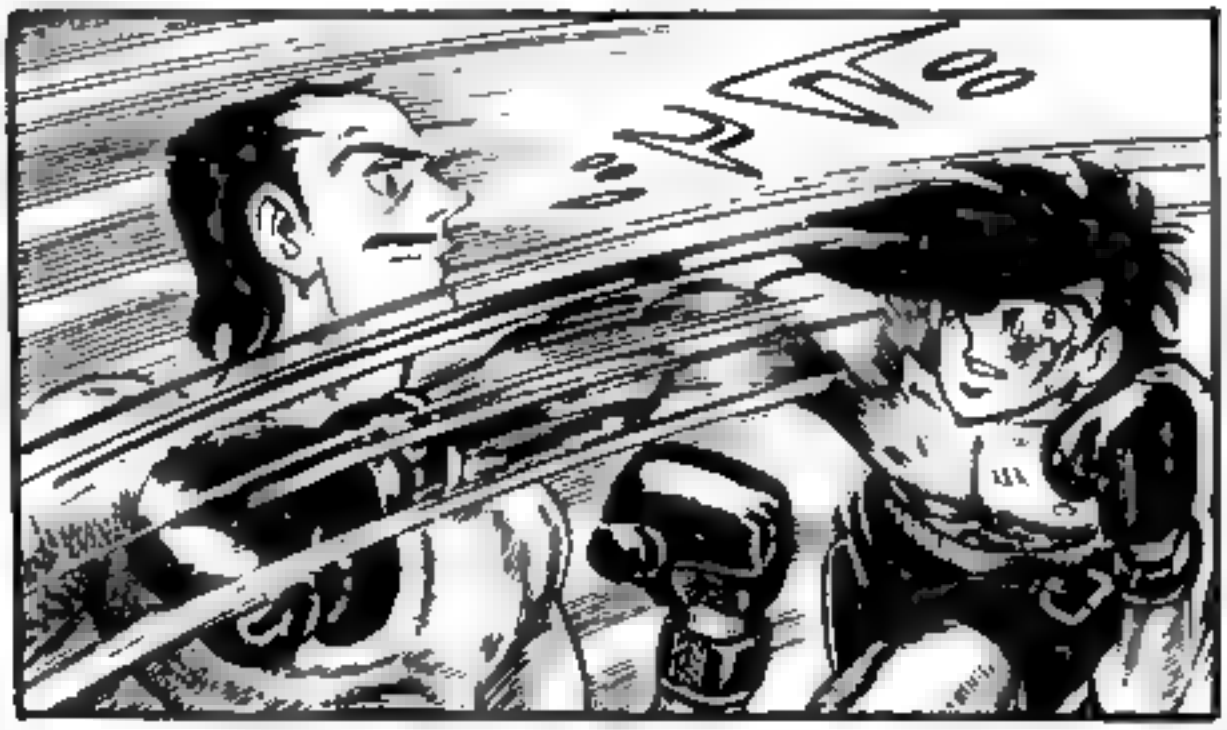
WHAT'RE YOU, A BULL!? IS INSTINCTIVELY CHARGING AT THE OPPONENT THE ONLY THING YOU KNOW HOW TO DO!?

AREN'T THERE ANY BRAIN CELLS IN YOUR DAMN SKULL!?

START FIGHTIN' PROPERLY, YOU DUMBASS!

IT'S LIKE THAT'S THE ONLY THING HE KNOWS HOW TO DO...

NOT AGAIN...



P... PARDON?
THIS IS THE ESSENCE BEHIND HIS REPUTATION AS THE FIGHTING COMPUTER OR MACHINE...
M... MENDOZA'S HARDLY MOVING...

MENDOZA DODGES ALL OF YABUKI'S PUNCHES WITH THE SMALLEST OF MOVEMENTS AT THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT.
JUST LOOK.
IT'S COMPARABLE TO MIKIRI IN KENDO, OR FOR THE LAYMAN, AN EXTREMELY MINUTE AND PRECISE DODGE.

A DODGE IS A DODGE AS LONG AS YOU AVOID THE ATTACK, WHETHER BY MOVING A FOOT OR AN INCH.

BUT TO RELIABLY DODGE BY MOVING ONLY A FEW INCHES IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR AN ORDINARY BOXER, WHOSE MOVEMENTS TEND TO BE BIG.

MENDOZA TOO, IS AMONG THOSE FEW MASTERS OF THEIR CRAFTS.

IN KENDO AS WELL, ONLY THE HIGHEST-CALIBRE MASTERS CAN CALMLY WAIT UNTIL THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT AND THEN MOVE JUST AN INCH AWAY FROM AN ATTACK. THIS PUTS THEM IN AN ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION TO COUNTERACT QUICKLY.

YABUKI IS NOW JUST A BULL BEING TOYED AROUND BY THE MATADOR MENDOZA!

IN BOXING, IT'S ESPECIALLY DEADLY SINCE ANY QUICK COUNTER-ATTACK AT SUCH A CLOSE DISTANCE WILL BECOME A COUNTER THAT USES THE OPPONENT'S WEIGHT BEHIND HIS OWN PUNCHES AGAINST HIM...

ドズ

IT SEEMS THE MATCH IS DECIDED AT LAST!

THERE!

R-RETURN TO YOUR CORNER!

SO THIS IS HOW IT ENDS...

3!

2!

1!

AND KNOWING THAT,

JOE MUST HAVE CHOSEN TO ADOPT A BRAVE BUT SUICIDAL CHARGE..

WHAT A CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS..

AGAINST SUCH A PERFECT COMBINATION OF OFFENSE AND DEFENSE... I GUESS THERE WASN'T EVEN A CHANCE IN A MILLION OF WINNING.

C-COACH, WAIT!

HE'S STILL GETTING UP!

AHH...

7!

6!

9!
8!
C... CAN YOU FIGHT?
LIE BACK DOWN, JOE!
I-IT'S ALL FUTILE!

ズルッ
OR YOU'LL BE KILLED!
STOP TRYIN' TO STAND!

F-FIGHT!

FINISH HIM, JOSÉ!

JOSÉ! GO FOR THE FINISH!

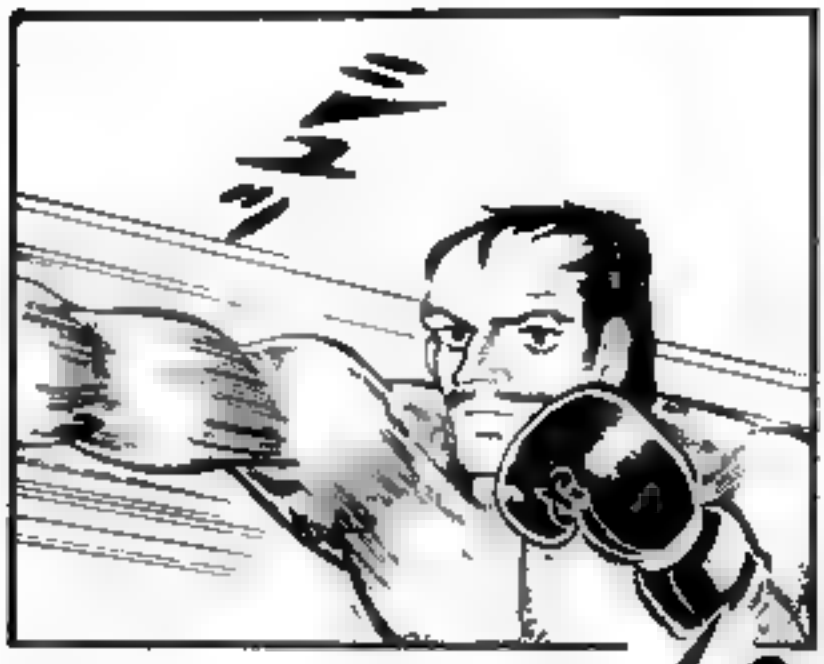
. . . .

FINISH HIM OFF!

HUFF

HUFF

F-FIGHT ON!



UGH...

HAHH!

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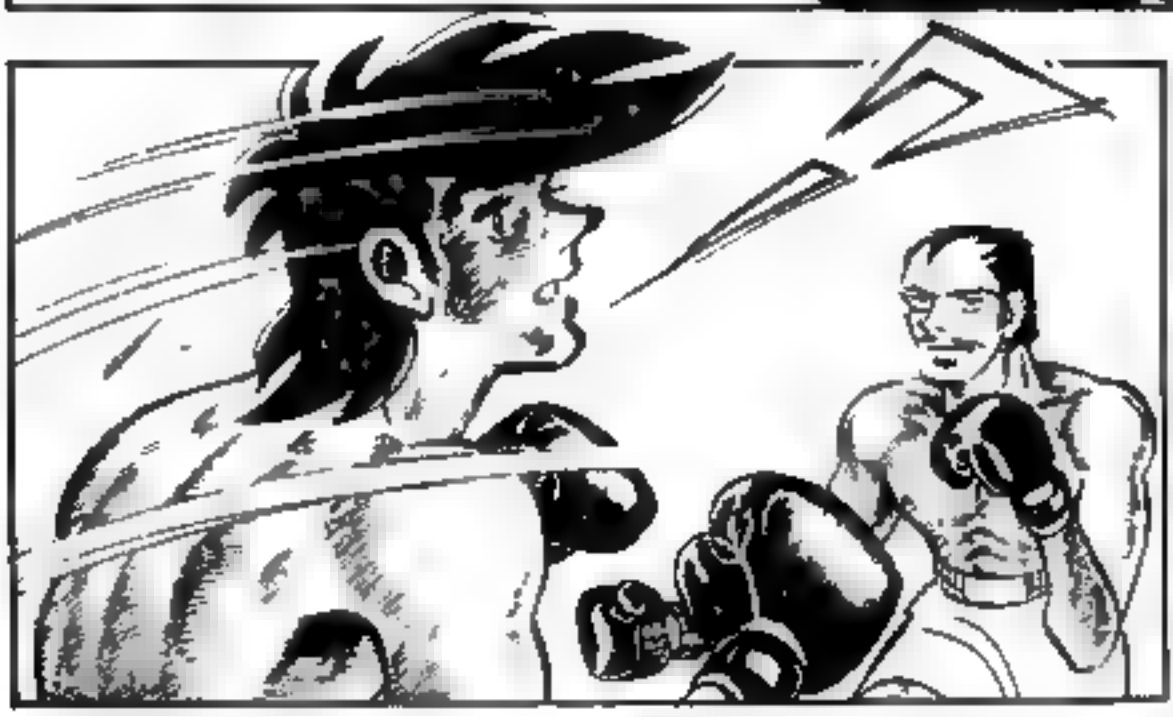


JOSÉ...

HUFF HUFF

HUFF

WHY AREN'T YOU FINISHING HIM OFF!?

WHAT'RE YOU DOING!?

HUFF HUFF

DAMN IT!

LL...
AA...

J... JOE...
YABUKI...

DING!

THAT'S THE END OF ROUND 3!

STOP!

JOE! THIS WAY!

TALKING CRAZY NOW, REF...

DON'T YOU START,

WHOA..

I BELIEVE CONTINUING THIS MATCH ANY LONGER IS UNREASONABLE.

MR. TANGE...

JOE, NO!

IF THIS MATCH ENDS 'CAUSE OF SOME BS. REF-CALL,

LET ME JUST WARN YOU NOW..

ド

YOU WON'T GET AWAY SCOT-FREE...

LET'S STOP... YOU'VE ALREADY DONE AS MUCH AS YOU COULD.

IT'S AS THE REF SAID...

WE SHOULD FORFEIT.

NOW'S NOT THE TIME TO KEEP RELYIN' ON STUBBORN SPIRIT ALONE!

NOT ON MY WATCH..

BUT FORFEITING'S A NO-GO.

SORRY FOR MAKIN' YOU WORRY YOUR PRETTY LIL' HEAD OFF, OLD MAN...

AA...

U...

YOU'RE GOING UP AGAINST JOSÉ MENDOZA! THE ONE WHO TURNED CARLOS RIVERA, FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE UNCROWNED EMPEROR, INTO THE MAN YOU SEE STANDING OVER THERE!

THINK ABOUT YOUR SITU-TATION MORE!

SO JUST GIVE IT UP ALREADY J-

STRONG ENOUGH TO MAKE JUST LASTING 3 ROUNDS AGAINST HIM INTO A BADGE OF HONOUR.

YOUR OPPONENT THIS TIME'S JUST TOO STRONG.

LOOK.

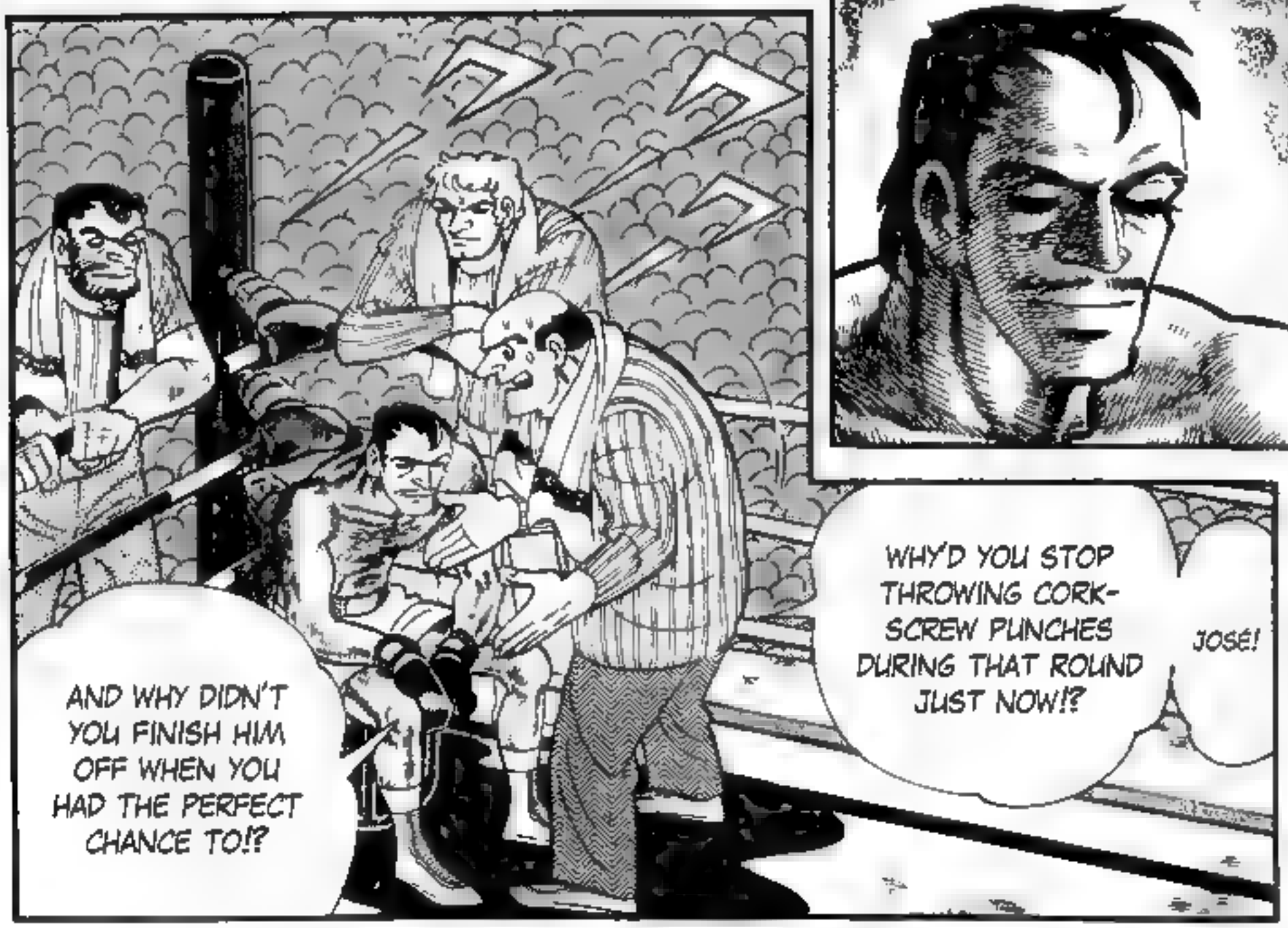
. . . .

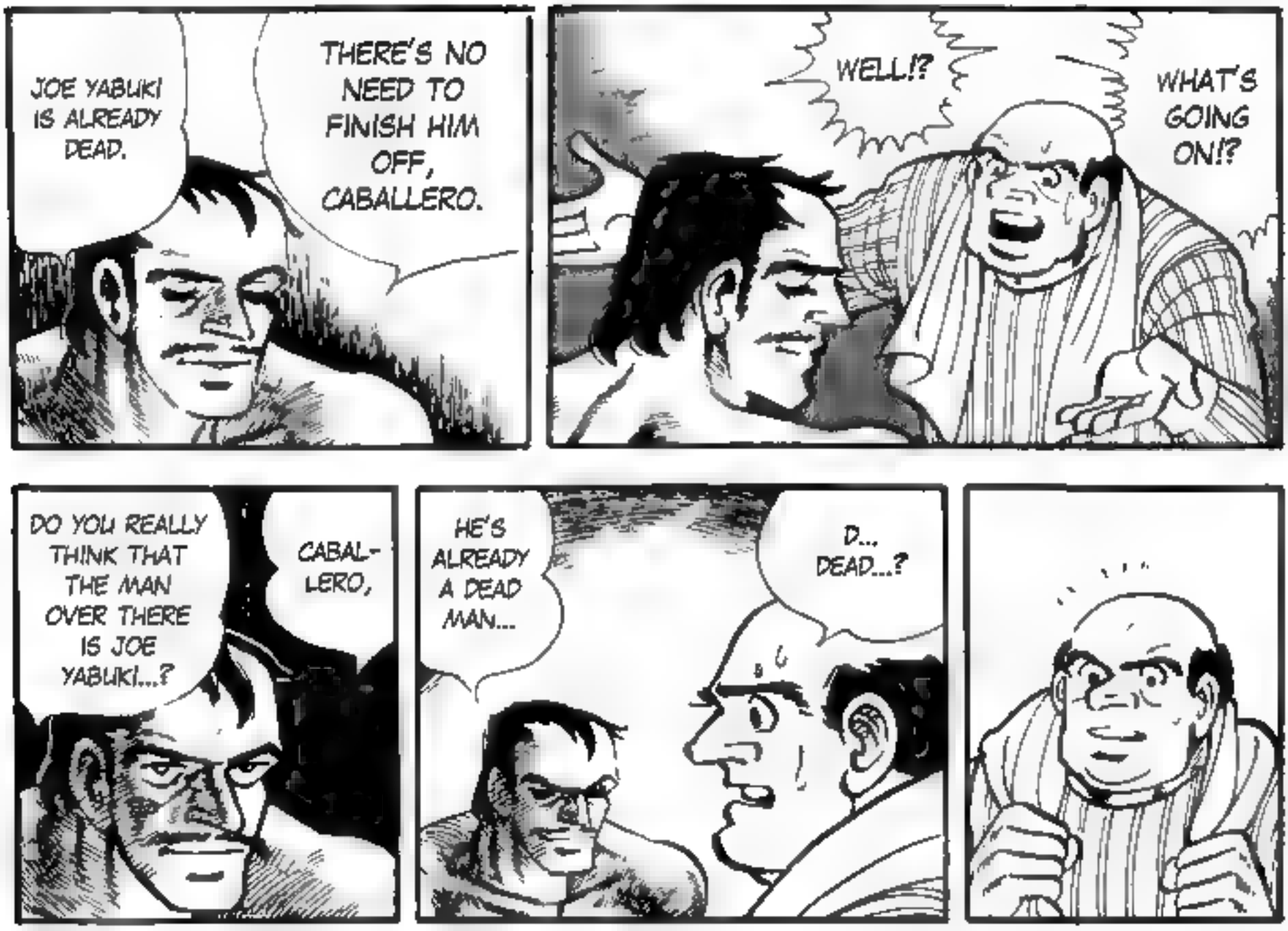
DON'T TALK ANYMORE.

SHUT UP.

. . .

GOD, YOU'RE ANNOYIN'


AND WHY DIDN'T YOU FINISH HIM OFF WHEN YOU HAD THE PERFECT CHANCE TO!?
WHY'D YOU STOP THROWING CORK-SCREW PUNCHES DURING THAT ROUND JUST NOW!?
JOSÉ!


JOE YABUKI IS ALREADY DEAD.
THERE'S NO NEED TO FINISH HIM OFF, CABALLERO.
WELL!?
WHAT'S GOING ON!?
DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT THE MAN OVER THERE IS JOE YABUKI...?
CABAL-LERO,
HE'S ALREADY A DEAD MAN...
D... DEAD...?

I'M NOT ONE TO FIGHT A BOXING MATCH WITH A DEAD MAN.

I'M THE WORLD CHAMPION.

JOSÉ...

I WONDER WHERE THE JOE YABUKI OF THEN HAS GONE OFF TO...

HE WAS SUCH A SPLENDID BOXER WHEN HE FOUGHT PINANG SARAWAK BACK IN HAWAII...

GO ADVISE THE REF TO STOP THIS MATCH.

ALRIGHT, CABALLERO.

THE SOONER YOU KNOCK HIM OUT, THE LESS HE'LL HAVE TO SUFFER.

LOOK, YOU JUST HAVE TO DELIVER THE FINISHING BLOW.

Y... YOU KNOW I CAN'T DO THAT.

ARE YOU LISTENIN' TO ME, JOSE!?

SO JUST FINISH IT IN THE NEXT ROUND!

JOSE MENDOZA

MOUTH GUARD.

WHAT...?

WE'RE FORFEIT-ING.

YOU DON'T NEED ONE.

SECONDS OUT!

BUT AGAINST A COMPUTER LIKE HIM, THERE WON'T BE ANY MIRACLES HAPPENING THIS TIME.

YOU MIGHT'VE COME BACK FROM DESPERATE SITUATIONS TO PULL OFF A MIRACLE TIME AND TIME AGAIN BEFORE,

G... GIVE IT UP, JOE.

A-AGHHH!

GET OUT.

DING!

!?

GO FINISH HIM OFF!

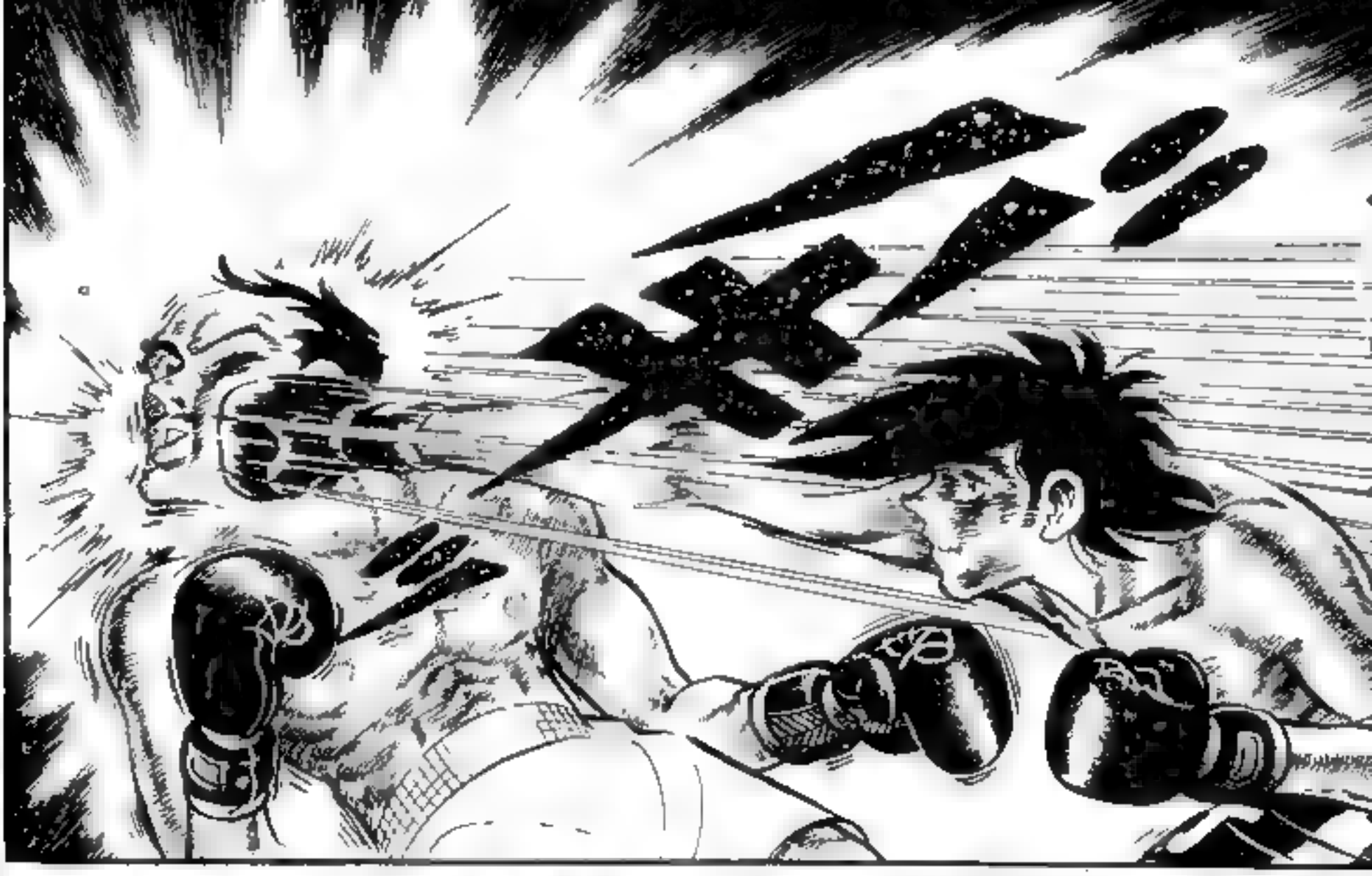
OOF!

OHH...

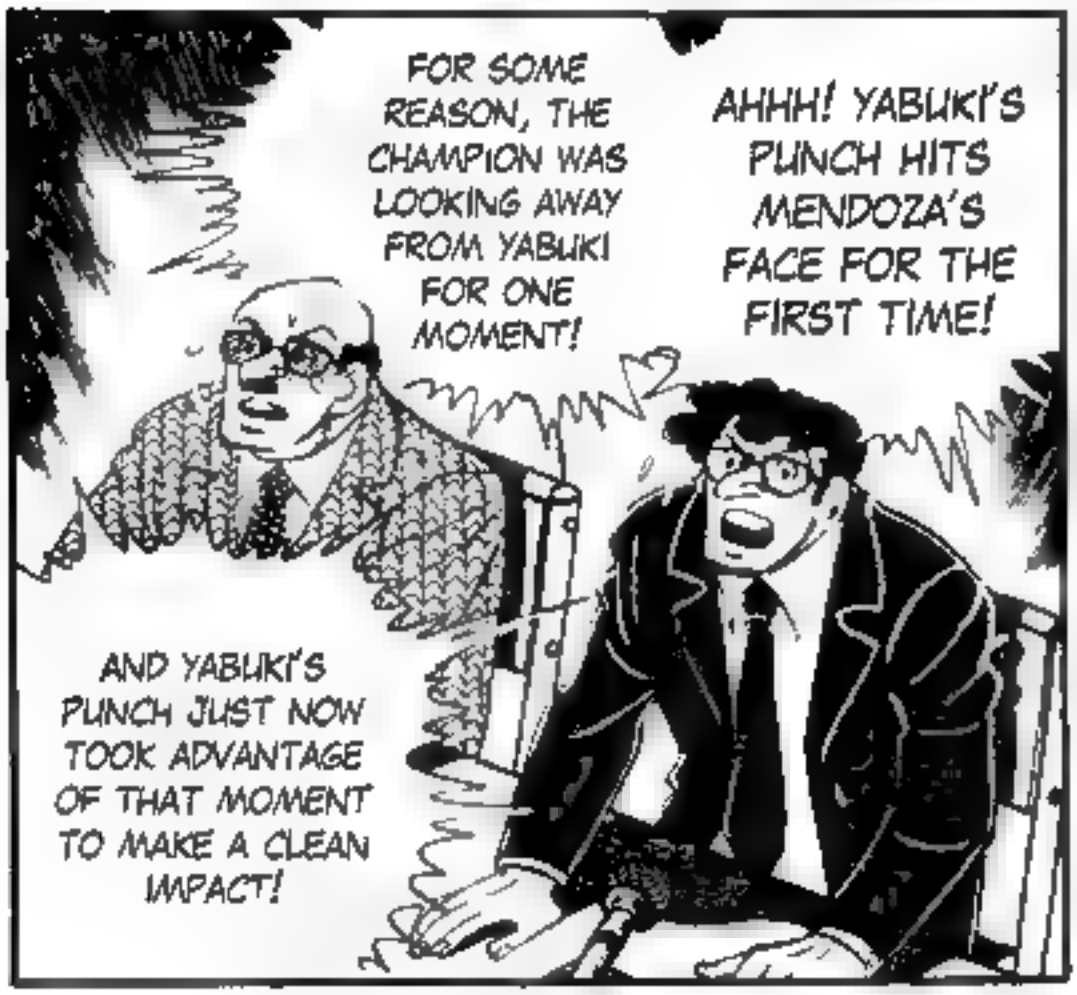
JOE YABUKI.

JOE...

J-JOEEE!



AHH...!


FOR SOME REASON, THE CHAMPION WAS LOOKING AWAY FROM YABUKI FOR ONE MOMENT!
AHHH! YABUKI'S PUNCH HITS MENDOZA'S FACE FOR THE FIRST TIME!
AND YABUKI'S PUNCH JUST NOW TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THAT MOMENT TO MAKE A CLEAN IMPACT!

U...
AAH...

NO...!

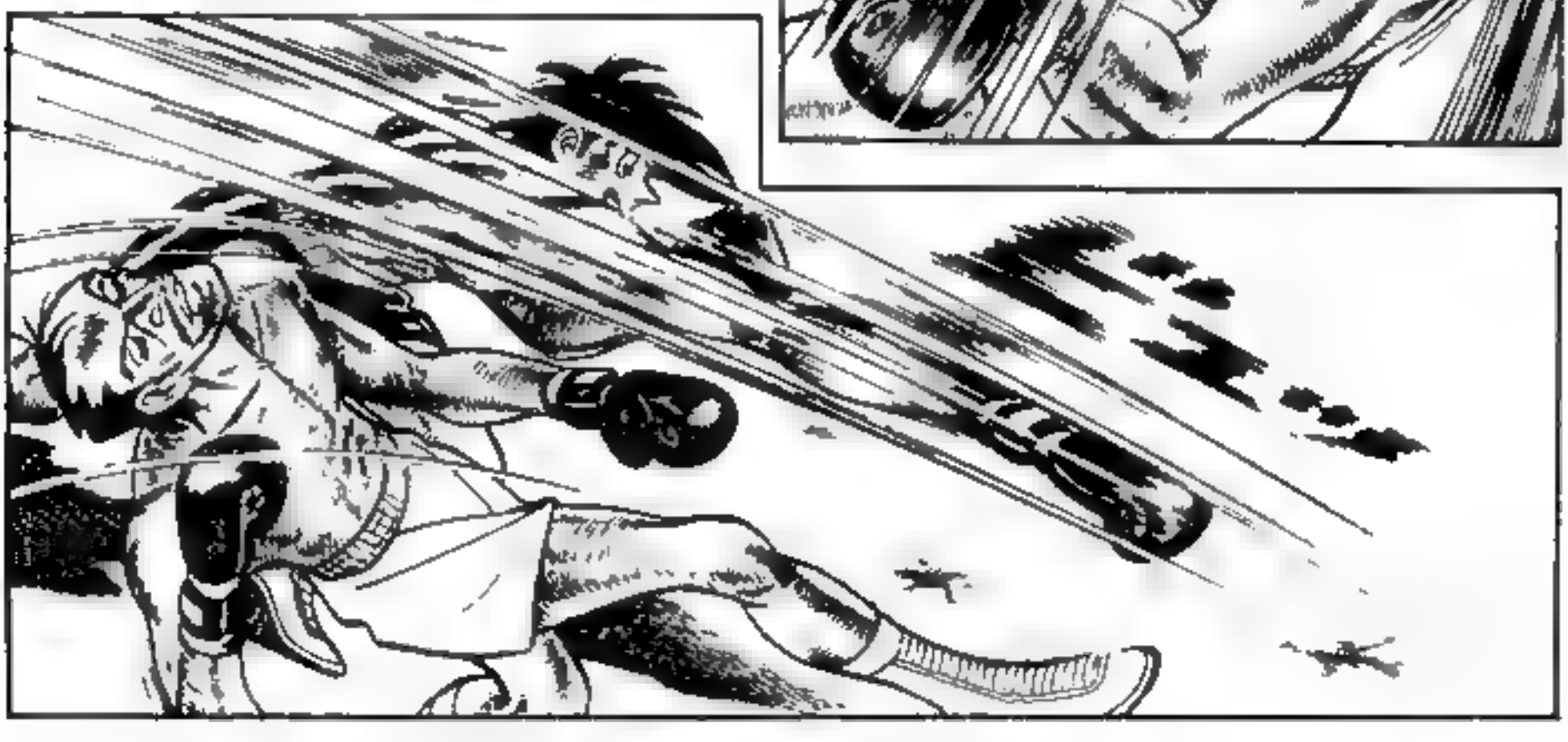
NOOO!

WHAT'S WRONG, JOSE!?

USE YOUR FEET TO DODGE HIS ATTACKS!

TURN AWAY!

U-USE YOUR FEET!

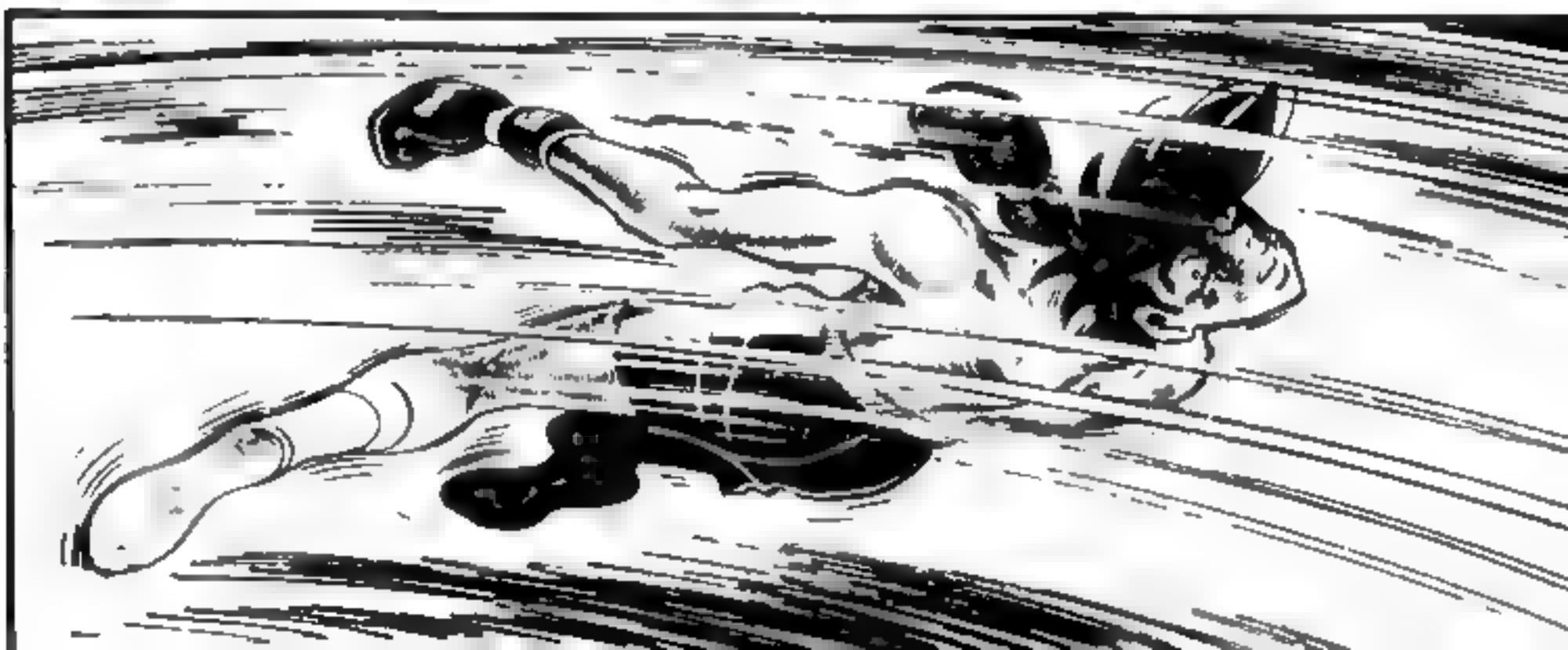


FINE, SO BE IT...
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

UU...
A...
AHH...

W-WATCH OUT, JOE! GET AWAY FROM THERE!

C-CARLOS..



AA...

NOOO!

KOOT

OSS

AGHH!

AGHHH...

OH MY GOD...

A...
U...

HUFF
HUFF

DON'T CHARGE HIM FROM THE FRONT! SWERVE AND ATTACK FROM THE SIDES!

JOEE! ATTACK LIKE YOU JUST DID!

IT'S... CARLOS...

AA... MNN UU...

ジム丈

WOULD BE HERE OF ALL PLACES...

TO THINK CARLOS RIVERA,

THAT'S ENOUGH...!

HOW LONG WILL YOU STUBBORNLY RESIST...!?

PANT

PANT

PANT

JOEEE... OH AA...

THE MAN BY THE RINGSIDE,

THERE'S NO MISTAKE.

OHH JOOOEE...

J... JOE...

GET IN THERE AND FINISH HIM OFF ALREADY!

WHY'RE YOU LOOKIN' AWAY!?

IS CARLOS RIVERA...

GO FOR THE FINISH! THE FINISH!

HMPH-

W-WATCH OUT!

GO FOR THE FINISH?

FINE THEN!

A DEAD MAN LIKE YOU,

JOE YABUKI...

SHOULDN'T BE STILL RAMPAGING.

THE DEAD...

NGH!

SHOULD,

REST IN PEACE,

LYING DOWN!

YOU FOOL...

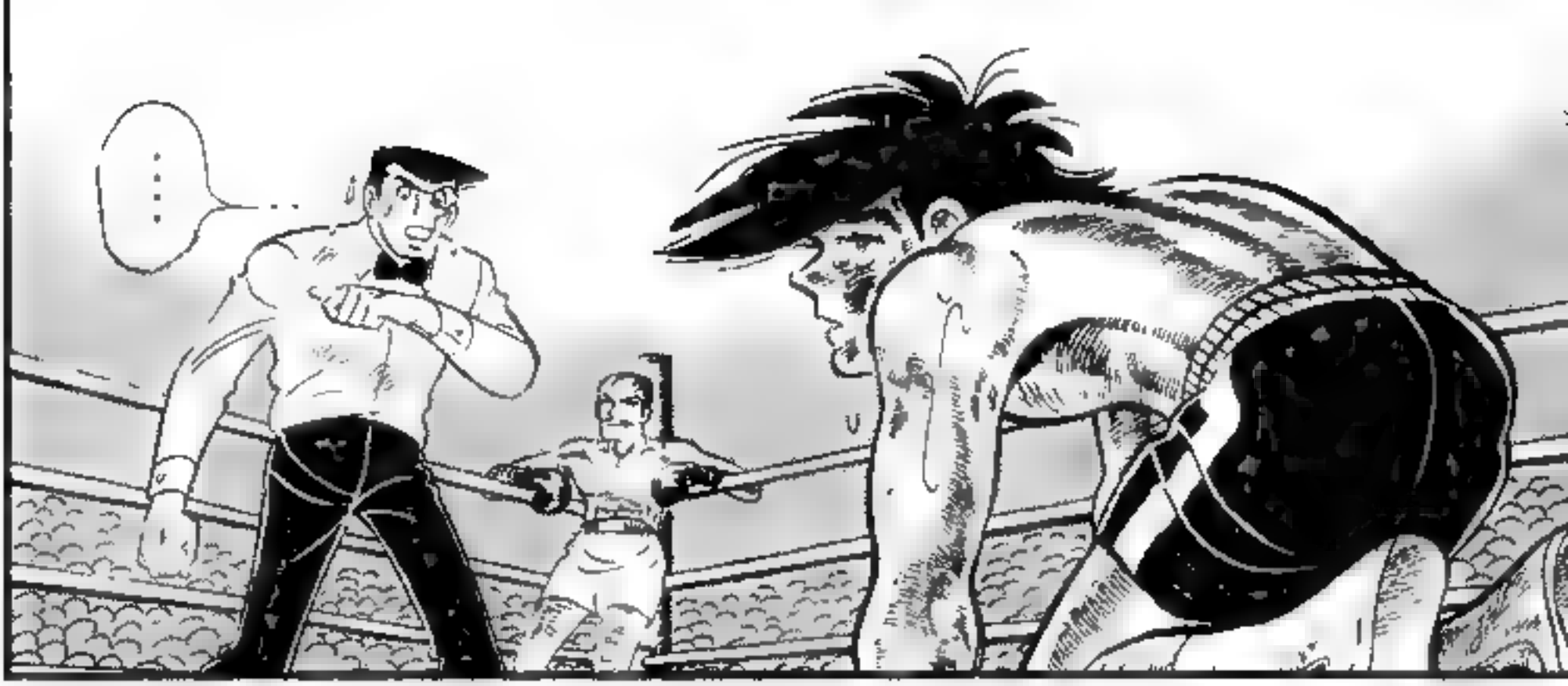
YOU...

I... I TOLD YOU NOT TO CHARGE IN FROM THE FRONT ..

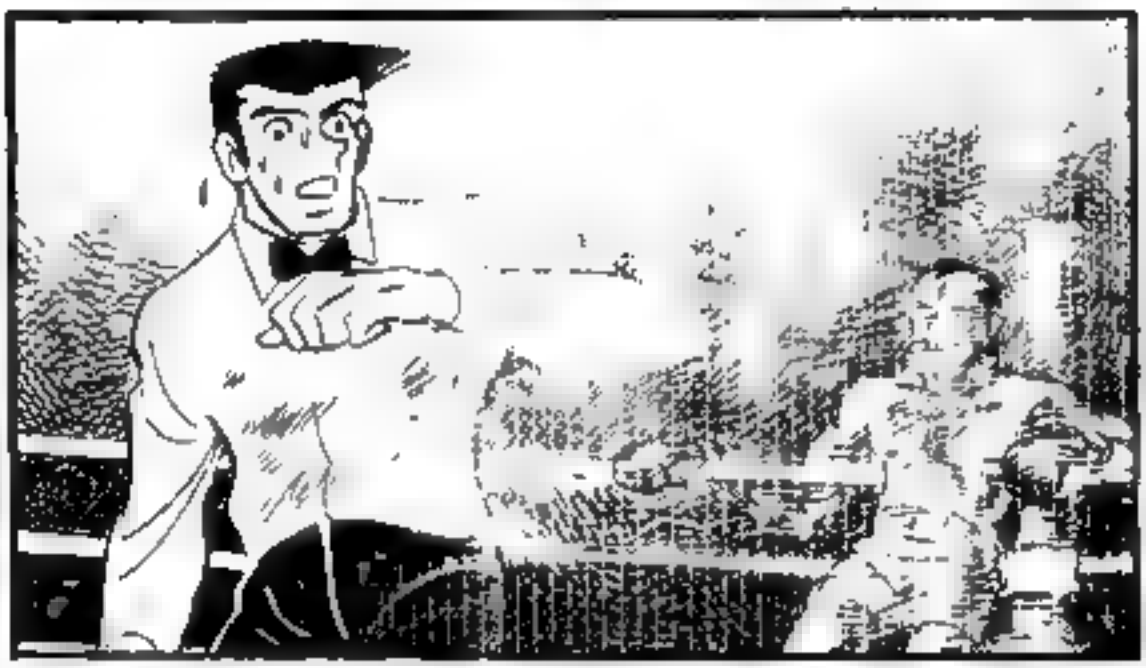
HE SHOULD NOW BE DONE...

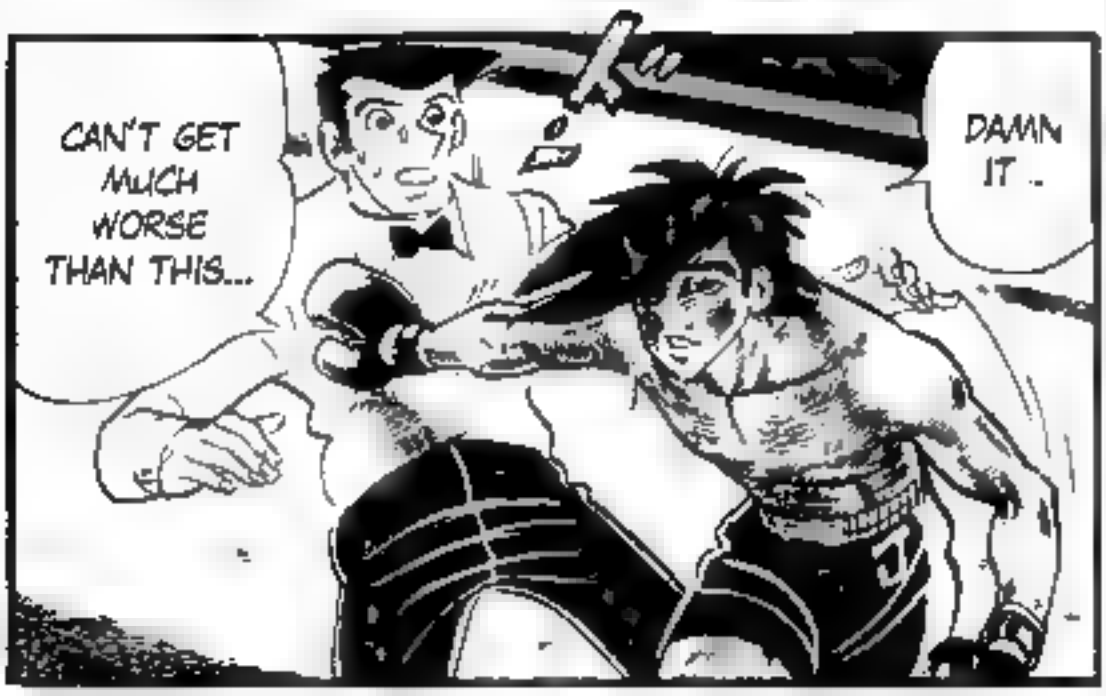
THAT'S A DOWN! RETURN TO YOUR CORNER!

AHH!?


. . . .

AH-




CAN'T GET MUCH WORSE THAN THIS...
DAMN IT..

MY RIGHT EYE'S ALL BLURRY AGAIN...
MY EYE...

STILL PLANNING TO RESIST, JOE YABUKI...?

ARGHHH!

F-FIGHT ON!

I'LL KEEP GOING UNTIL HE KILLS ME!

DAMN IT! FINE, SO BE IT!

I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE YOU LIKE CARLOS RIVERA IF POSSIBLE,

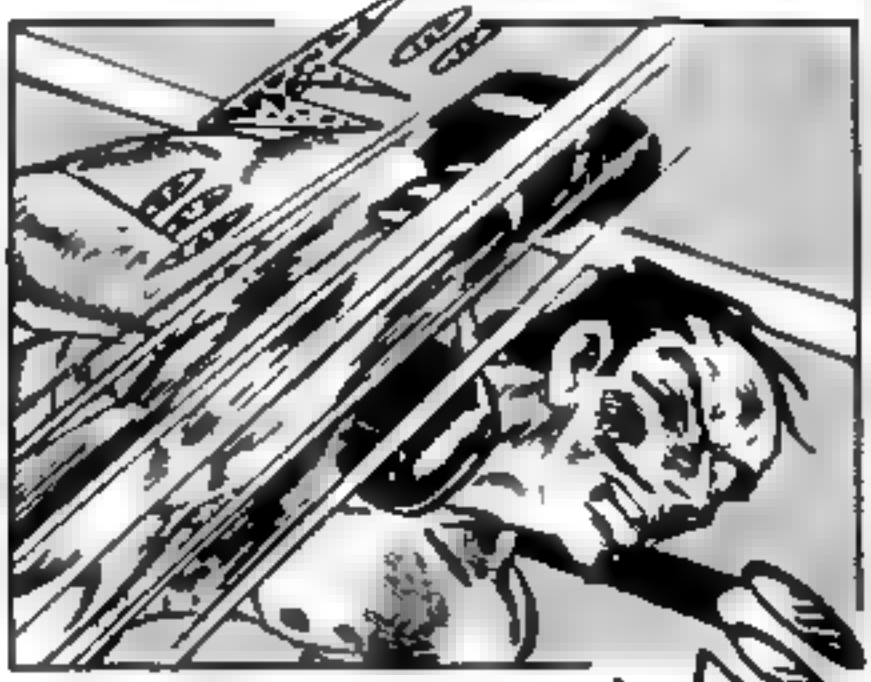
BUT I GUESS I HAVE NO CHO-

WHA...!?

ALL OF MY PUNCH ON HIM FOR THAT ONE...
I GOT...
I... I HIT HIM...

HOW... DID HE HIT ME...?
I'M SURE I DODGED THAT PUNCH IN THE SAME WAY I'VE BEEN DODGING THIS ENTIRE MATCH...
W... WHAT IN THE WORLD...

S-SENPAI!
HE HIT HIM AGAIN...
H... HE HIT HIM...



NOOO!
J-JOSÉ...

YOU CAN DO IT!

KEEP ATTACKIN' LIKE THAT!

THAT'S IT, JOE!

...YOU SON OF A GUN!

I.. I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...

DING!

THAT'S THE END OF ROUND 4!

STOP!

JOSÉ!

HUFF HUFF...

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

.....

COME ON!

JOE! THIS WAY!

WHERE WERE YOU KEEPING'EM KILLER PUNCHES HIDDEN UNTIL NOW!?

WERE YOU JUST PRE-TENDIN' TO BE BAD UNTIL NOW, YOU RASCAL!?

SEE, YOU *CAN* DO IT, YABUKI!

WELL!?

WHAT HAPPENED OUT THERE!?

Y-YOU DID IT, SENPAI!

THAT WAS AMAZING!

YOU REALLY ARE SOME-THING...!

PANT

PANT

WHAT...

WHAT HAPPENED, CHAMP?

IS STANDING BY JOE'S CORNER...

CARLOS RIVERA...

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN YOU GET HIT ONE-SIDEDLY!

IN ALL MY YEARS AS YOUR SECOND,

...

RIVERA!?

AHH!

I-IT'S RIVERA..

KEPT SUBCONSCIOUSLY DRAWING MY EYES TOWARDS HIM.

THE SHOCK FROM SEEING HIM THERE,

AT FIRST,

...

YES... IT WAS DIFFERENT IN THE SECOND HALF OF THAT ROUND...

WAIT.. "AT FIRST?"

USED THAT MOMENT OF DISTRACTION TO HIT ME..

JOE YABUKI,

AND YET.. HIS PUNCHES DRIFT TOWARDS THE DIRECTION I DODGE!

I DODGE, AND I DODGE,

.....

EVEN THOUGH I CLEARLY DODGED HIS PUNCHES BY MOVING EVER SO SLIGHTLY AT THE LAST MOMENT, FOR SOME REASON, THEY ALL FOUND THEIR MARK.

WHAT'S EVEN MORE FRUSTATING IS THE FACT THAT A MAN ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSE IS DOING THIS TO ME...

BUT NOBODY ELSE BUT HIM HAS MADE MY DEFENSE FEEL SO WORTHLESS.

I'VE GONE UP AGAINST A LOT OF GREAT BOXERS IN MY CAREER,

I JUST CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT!

I DON'T UNDER-STAND..

I THINK YOU'RE PANICKING.

I...

...

NO!

LOOK, IT'S PERFECTLY UNDERSTANDABLE. YOU WERE OVERCOME BY THE SHOCK OF SEEING THE MAN YOU CRIPPLED AND-

IN ANY CASE, IT'S RIDICULOUS FOR A BOXER OF YOUR CALIBRE TO GET ALL NERVOUS AFTER GETTING KNOCKED AROUND A BIT.

ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT

I KNOW I DODGED JOE YABUKI'S PUNCHES!

IT'S NOT BECAUSE OF CARLOS RIVERA!

JUST FOCUS ON TAKING HIM OUT FOR GOOD IN THE NEXT ROUND, ALRIGHT!?

HE CAN'T KEEP GOING FOR MUCH LONGER.

WHATEVER HAPPENED IN THAT ROUND DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT YOUR OPPONENT'S ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSE.

YOU'RE THE WORLD CHAMPION! THE PERFECT BOXER!

THAT'S IT! NOTHING MORE, NOTHING LESS!

IT'S JUST THAT THE FIGHT WAS GOING TOO EASILY UP UNTIL NOW THAT YOU SUBCONSCIOUSLY LET YOUR GUARD DOWN A BIT.

YOU CAN DEFINITELY BEAT JOE YABUKI! I KNOW IT!

BUT ..

FINE...

SORRY FOR MAKING YOU WORRY.

ALRIGHT, I UNDERSTAND, CABALLERO...

I WANT TO GET OUT AND TAKE A SHOWER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

I'M SICK AND TIRED OF THIS STENCH OF SWEAT AND ROSIN ON THE RING.

AS SOON AS THE BELL RINGS, I'LL TRAP HIM ON THE ROPES AND DELIVER THE FINISHING BLOW

IN THE NEXT ROUND,

AHAHAHA!

MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE YOU'VE ALWAYS WRAPPED UP YOUR FIGHTS WITHIN 3 ROUNDS,

THANKS. HEARING THAT MAKES ME FEEL A WHOLE LOT BETTER.

BUT 5 ROUNDS IS JUST TOO LONG FOR ME. I CAN FEEL MY HEAD GETTING FAINT!

HE'S STILL ALIVE.

THERE'S SOME-THING EERY...

JOE YABUKI'S NOT DEAD YET..

KEEP UP THE PRESSURE JUST LIKE THAT!

G-GOT IT, JOE!?

BUT ALSO TRY TO GET HIT A LITTLE LESS THIS TIME!

YOU'RE MAKING ME YAWN...

HOW MANY TIMES YOU GOTTA REPEAT THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER AGAIN?

STOP TALKING.

SIDESTEP OR WEAVE AROUND HIS PUNCHES AND-

INSTEAD OF CHARGING FROM THE FRONT,

. . . .

NO, NOT THAT ONE! THE BIGGER ONE!

HEY, KOUNO. GET ME A FRESH TOWEL FROM BELOW.

HERE, DON'T FORGET YOUR MOUTH-GUARD.

SURE.

SECONDS OUT!

OWW...

M-MY MOUTH-GUARD...

ゴム

OWW OWW OWWWW!

AGHH!

ゴム

カラ

JOE... DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE...!?

NGHH!
ドド…

IT... IT HIT AGAIN...

UGH!

JOSÉ!

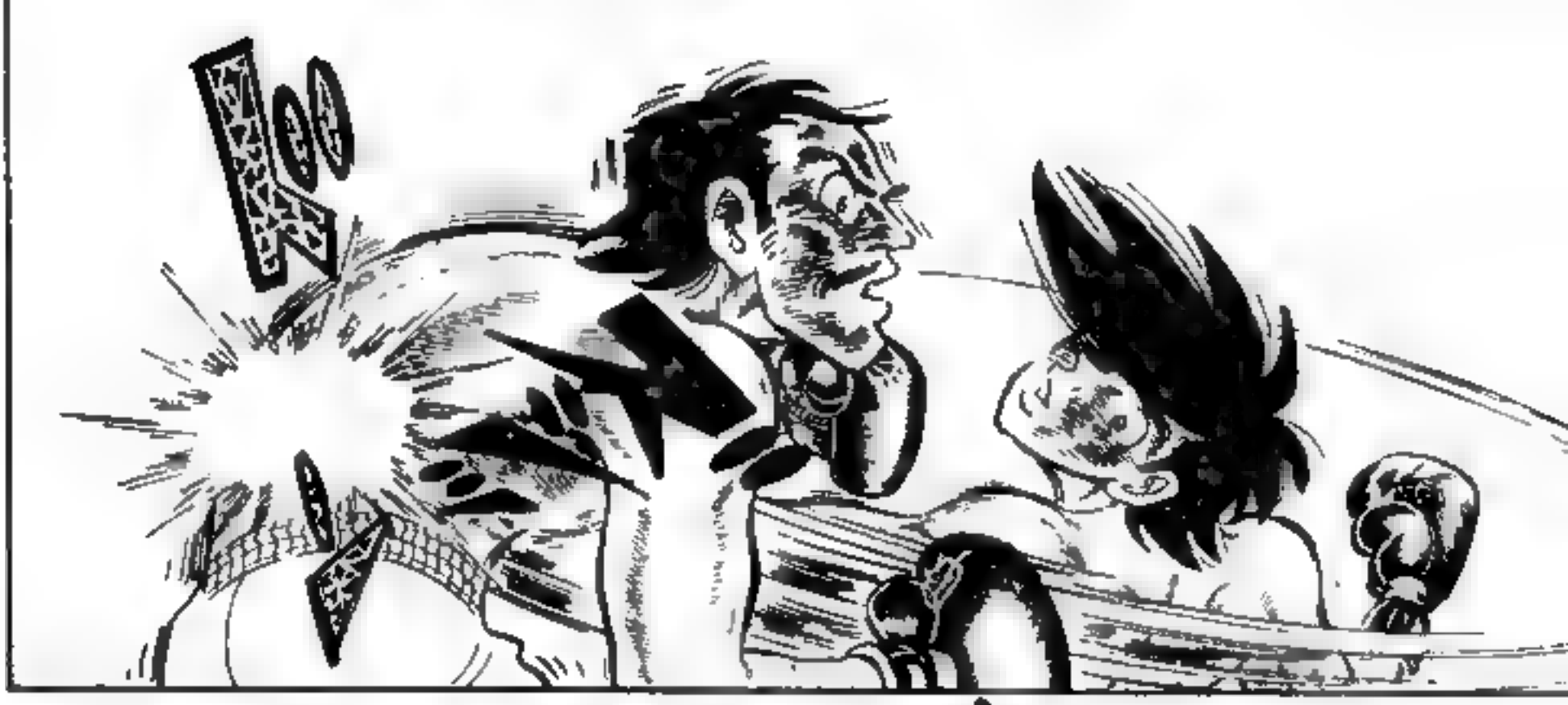
J...

WOO HOO!

ALRIGHT!

SOCK IT TO 'IM, YABUKI!

W... WHY...



KEEP HITTIN' IM!
TIME TO PAY HIM BACK FOR ALL THAT DAMAGE!

SEND THE CHAMPION'S LIL' MOUSTACHE FLYIN' LEFT AND RIGHT!

ALRIGHT! JUST A FEW MORE HITS RIGHT THERE...!

WAY TO GO, SENPAI!

I GUESS I WAS WORRIED FOR NOTHING!

SEEING HOW YOU'RE BRILLIANTLY GETTING PAST THE CHAMP'S DEFENSES,

FOR A MOMENT, YOU HAD ME WORRYING IF SOMETHING HAD AFFECTED YOUR VISION AGAIN BUT...

OHH... JOE...

UGH...

IT'S JOSÉ MENDOZA WHO GOES DOWN THIS TIME!

AGHHH! THE CHAMPION IS DOWN!

WHAT A COMEBACK BY YABUKI!

JOSÉ MENDOZA, THE PERFECT BOXER WHO HAS NEVER SUFFERED A SINGLE DOWN IN HIS ENTIRE CAREER...

THE CHAMPION IS DOWN! I REPEAT, THE CHAMPION IS DOWN!

IS NOW SPRAWLED ACROSS THE RING'S MAT!

2!

1!

3!

J... JOSÉ...

NOO...

OHHHH!

YES!

4...

WHAT'RE YOU DOING!?

RETURN TO YOUR CORNER!

JUST FOCUS ON COUNTIN' DOWN!

AWWW, WHO CARES ABOUT THAT CRAP, REF!

YEAH! KEEP COUNTIN' DOWN, REF!

S-SIX...

7!

HUFF...

HUFF

HUFF

8!

F-FIGHT ON!

NOW'S YOUR CHANCE!

CHARGE IN!

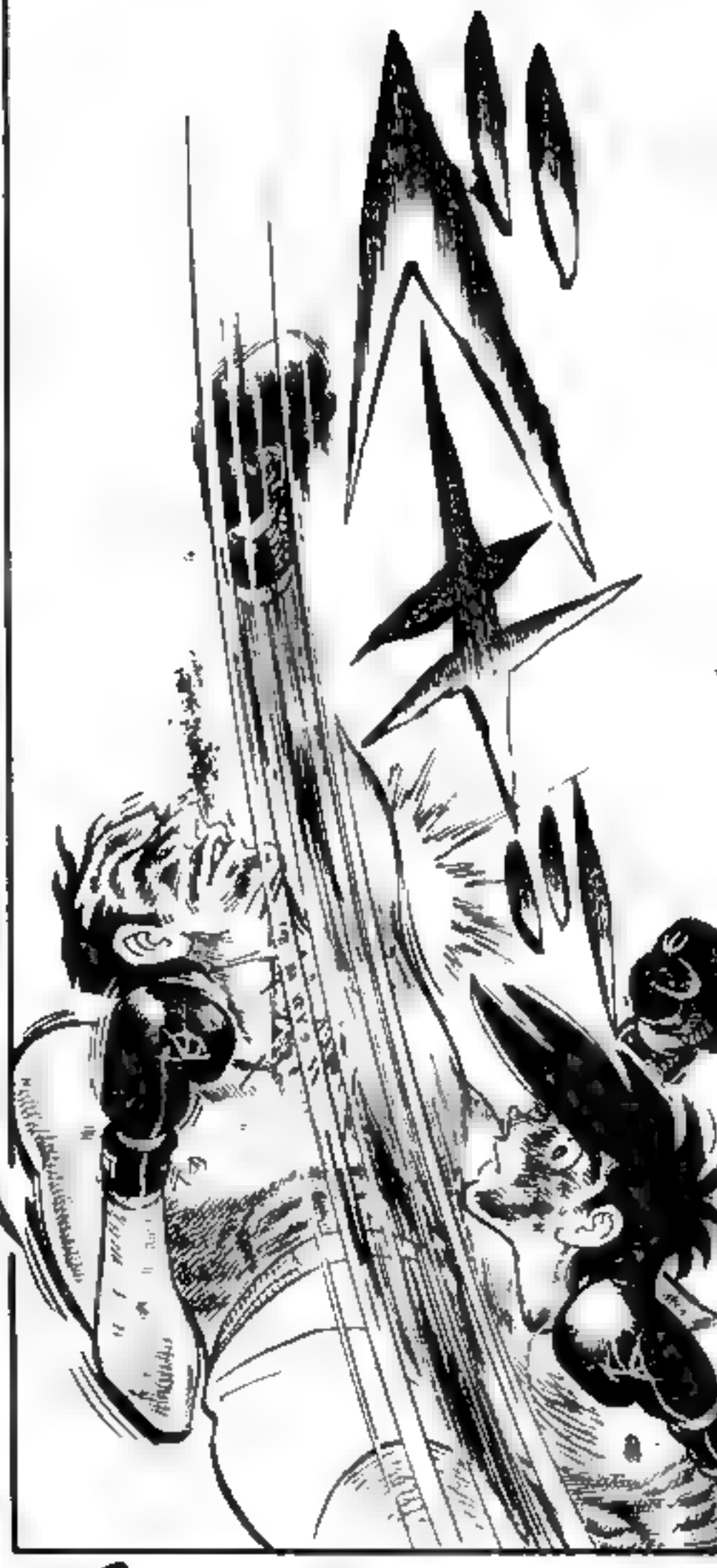
COME ON, JOE!

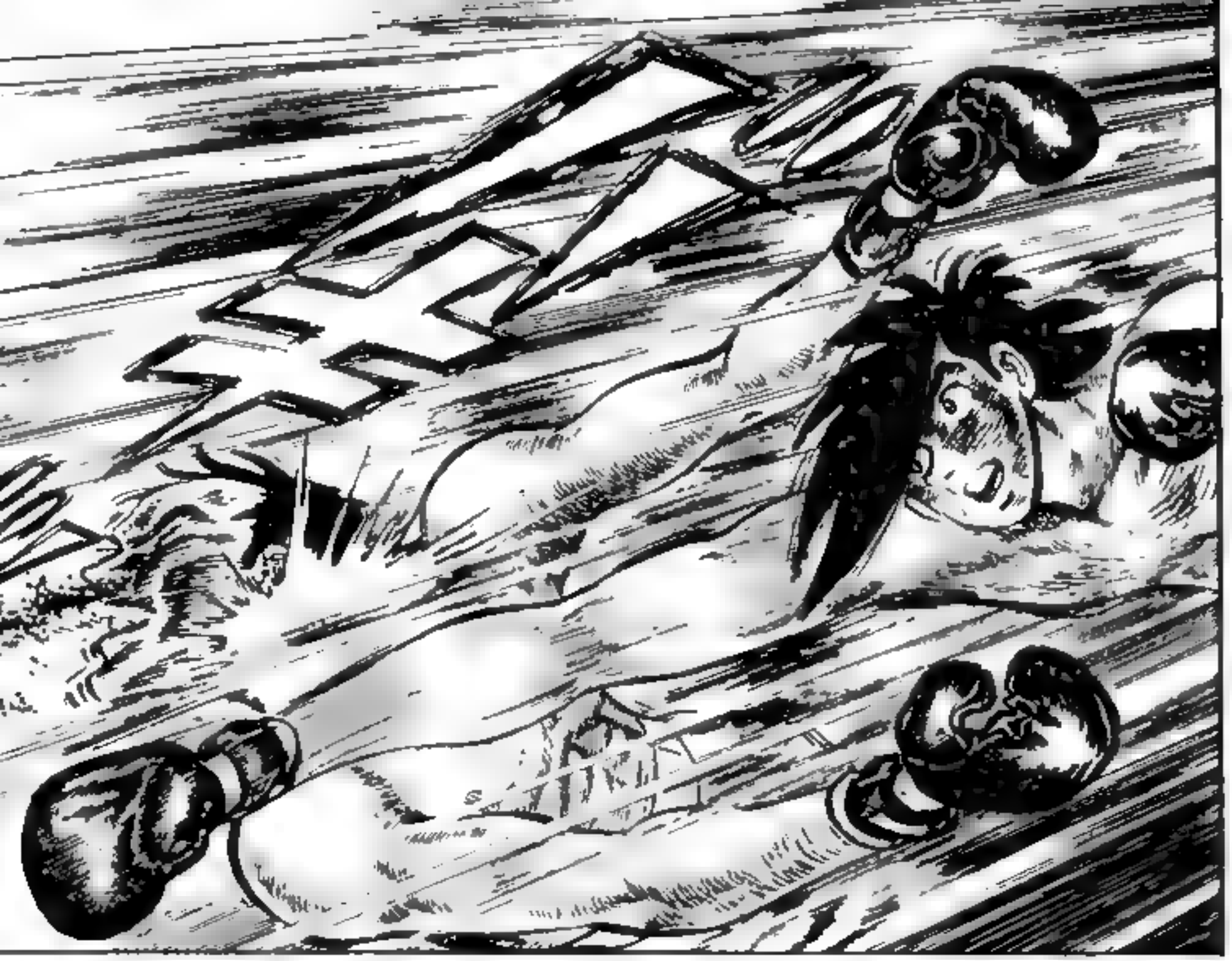
HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

UGH!




SIX

DING!

THE BELL FOR ROUND 5 ALSO RINGS NOW!

AHH!

H-HE DID IT!

5!

4!

3!

B-BUT SINCE MENDOZA WENT DOWN JUST SECONDS BEFORE THE BELL, THE REF KEEPS COUNTING DOWN!

CAN THE CHAMPION STAND BEFORE THE COUNT OF 10!?

DON'T STAND!

KEEP ON SLEEPIN', JOSÉ!

IT'S TIME TO HAND YOUR TITLE TO JOE!

YOU'VE GOTTA STAND UP!

J-JOSÉ...

S-STAND UP!

HUFF...

HUFF...

9!

THE CHAMPION JUST BARELY ESCAPES A KO-DEFEAT!

AND HE FULLY STANDS BACK UP IN THE KNICK OF TIME!

YOU CAN JUST SEE HOW MUCH PAIN HE'S IN AS HE WIPES HIS NOSE-BLEED!

AHH! HE'S STARTING TO STAND!

7!

8!

IT WAS ONLY A LITTLE WHILE AGO WHEN IT SEEMED WE COULD ALL SEE THE WRITING ON THE WALL FOR THE BRUISED AND BATTERED YABUKI... BUT SINCE THEN, HE'S STAGED A MIRACULOUS COMEBACK!

THIS MATCH HAS QUICKLY TURNED INTO AN EXCITING FIGHT!

Y-YES... IT REALLY CAN'T BE CALLED ANYTHING OTHER THAN MIRACULOUS...

AWWW! SOOOO CLOSE!

JUST ONE MORE FREAKIN' SECOND AND THE MATCH WAS DONE...!

YOU CAN CLEARLY SEE THE PANIC SET IN MENDOZA'S SECONDS, WHO HAVE NEVER SEEN HIM GO THROUGH SUCH A HARD, DRAWN-OUT FIGHT!

GET ME SOME MORE WATER FOR THIS SPONGE!

H-HERE'S THE VASELINE!

JOSE'S WEAKER AT... TAKING PUNCHES THAN I'D EXPECTED...

HA...

OHH! SURE, SURE!

HMM?

MEANWHILE, THE SECONDS IN YABUKI'S CORNER CAN'T CONTAIN THEIR EXCITEMENT!

WOOHOO! YOU DID IT, YOU DID IT!

WELL DONE, JOE! WELL DONE!

THAT WAS CLOSE, WASN'T IT!?

HIS CRITICAL FLAW IS THAT HE'S WEAK AT TAKING DAMAGE.

JOSÉ'S... NO PERFECT BOXER.

HEY, GET ME SOME ROSIN!

IS MORE SECONDS AND YOU WOULD'VE FINISHED HIM OFF IN THAT ROUND!

BUT I THINK IT'S STILL TOO EARLY TO MAKE A STATEMENT LIKE THAT.

HMM... IT'S TRUE THAT YOU DID MANAGE TO KNOCK HIM DOWN TWICE THIS ROUND...

THAT'S WHY I'M SAYING HE'S WEAK.

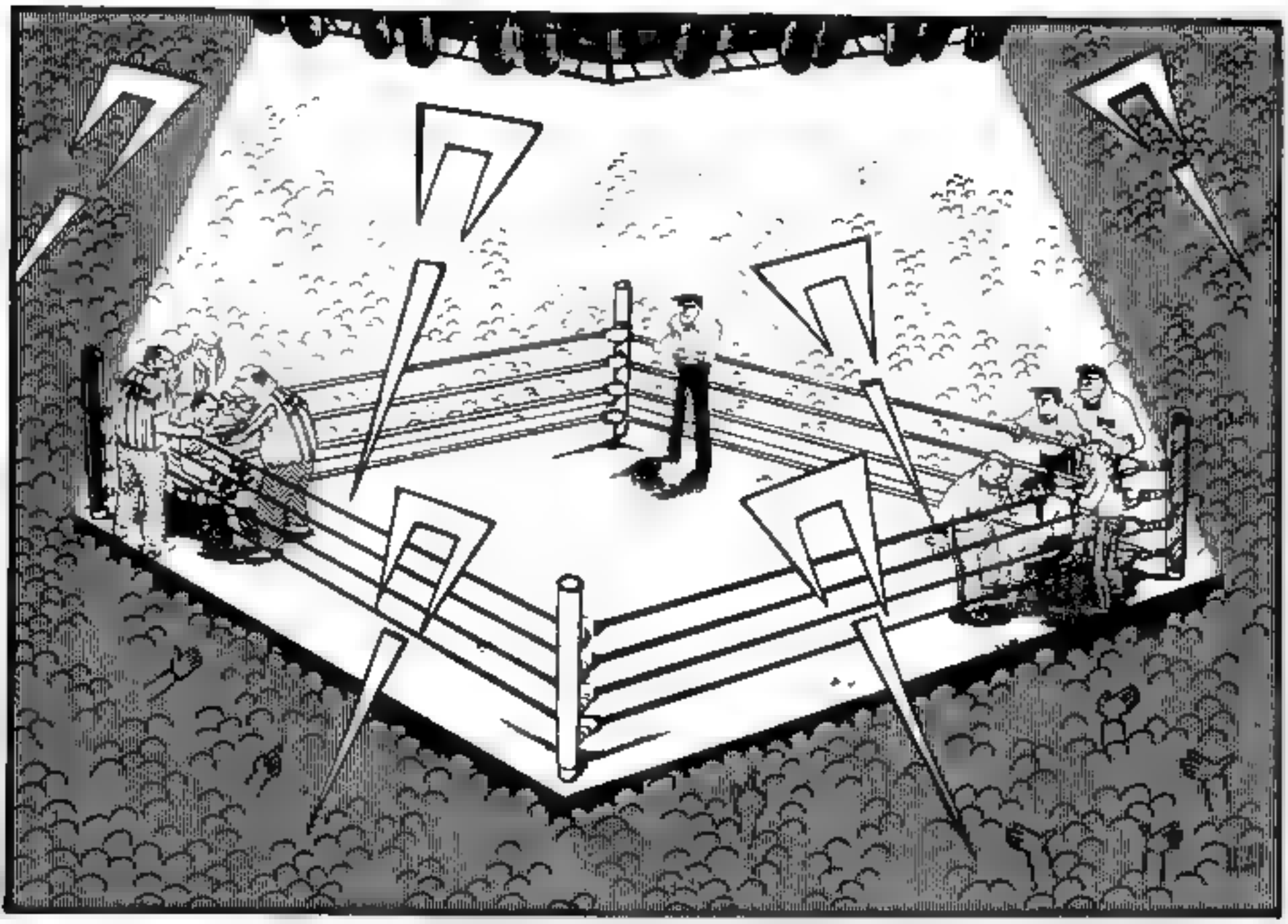
W.. WHAT ..?

I'LL PROVE IT TO YOU IN THE NEXT ROUND.

JUST WATCH.

ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU SAW FOR YOURSELF IN HAWAII JUST HOW TOUGH THE CHAMP IS, OR DID YOU FORGET?

NO, BUT I'D FORGOTTEN SOMETHING ELSE UNTIL NOW.



J-JOE...?

ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS REACH FORWARD A LITTLE BIT AND TAKE IT!

YABUKI! THE TITLE-BELT'S DANGLING RIGHT BEFORE YOUR EYES!

YOU CAN DO IT!

JOSÉ! DON'T FORGET TO TURN TO HIS RIGHT!

MY RIGHT...?

GOT IT!

SO THEY REALIZED IT, DID THEY NOW...

HMPH...

AHH-

OH WELL!

AHH!

HEH

HEH
HEH

LET'S SEE WHAT YOU GOT!

COME AT ME, CHAMP...

007

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND, JOE!?

WHY NOW? AT A TIME LIKE THIS!?

T-THAT IDIOT! HE'S TRYING TO COPY THE STUNT MENDOZA PULLED ON IALIKEA IN HAWAII!

J-JUST WHAT IS YABUKI DOING...!?
I... I DON'T KNOW...
W-WHAT'S GOING ON!?
AHHHH!

DON'T GET COCKY NOW JUST BECAUSE YOU DID WELL LAST ROUND!
FIGHT SERIOUSLY!
YABUKI! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING OUT THERE!?

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

IF A BOXER HAS HIS SHOULDERS HELD IN PLACE, HE CAN'T USE ENOUGH UPPER BODY STRENGTH FOR A DECENT PUNCH.

YOU SHOULD KNOW BEST WHY THAT IS, AM I RIGHT?

NOT AS MUCH AS IT MIGHT SEEM AT A GLANCE, THAT IS.

HEH HEH... NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU HIT BACK, YOU AIN'T GONNA HURT ME MUCH.

AIN'T THAT ONE OF YOUR FAVOURITE TRICKS!?

YOU USED THAT TRICK TO BLUFF HOW TOUGH YOU WERE.
BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO HIDE,
YOUR GREATEST WEAKNESS AS A BOXER TO ME!

WILL NATURALLY BE PRESSED TO RELY ON HIS DEFENSIVE SKILLS TO SURVIVE..
A BOXER WHO'S WEAK AT TAKING HITS,
AND HONE THOSE SKILLS TO PERFECTION,
ABOVE ALL ELSE!
THAT'S IT!
YOU CAN DO IT, YABUKI!

OH DEAR LORD...

DESCRIBES YOU PERFECTLY, CHAMP!

THAT KIND OF BOXER...

THAT'S A ROPE-DOWN!

STOP!

RETURN TO YOUR CORNER!

IT'S ALSO EASIER TO KNOCK YOU DOWN AGAIN AFTER THE FIRST TIME.

AND BECAUSE OF THAT,

4!

5!

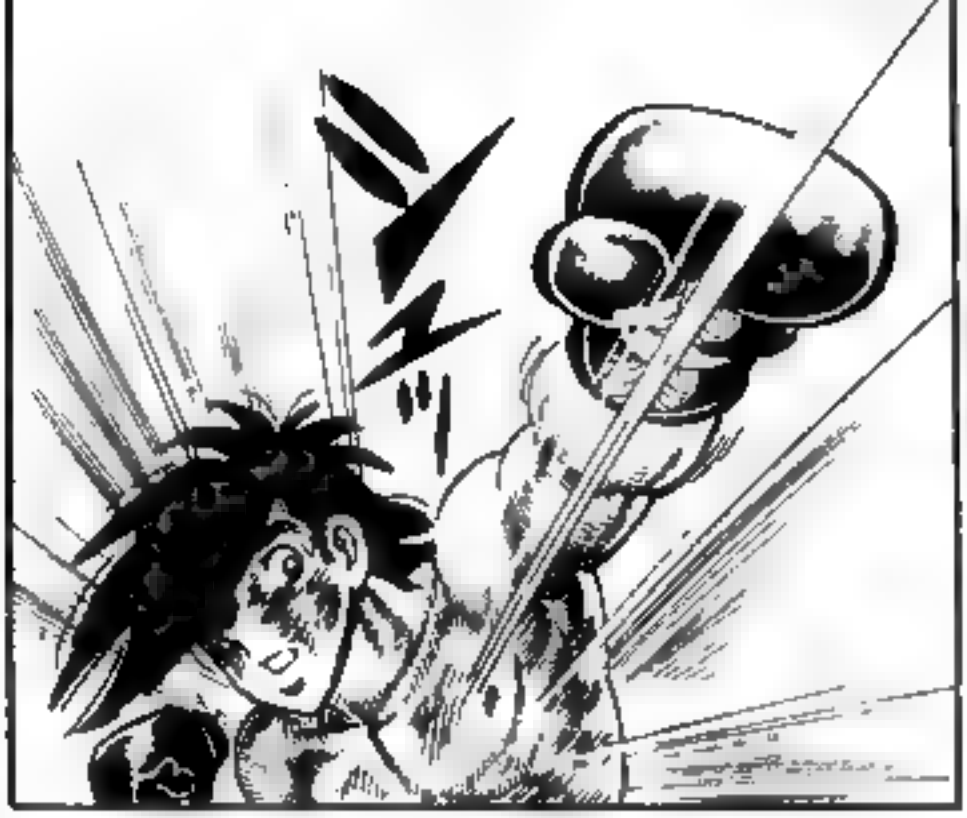
6!

JUST LIKE THE PRECISE MACHINE YOU ARE, THE MORE VULNERABLE YOU'RE LEFT AFTER ONE HARD IMPACT..

HUFF

HUFF

F-FIGHT!



AHH...

HE HAS THE CHAMPION SUCKED INTO HIS PACE!

IT'S A FIERCE AND UNENDING ONSLAUGHT FROM YABUKI!

YABUKI ATTACKS!

L-LOOK!

.. W-WHAT DID YOU SAY!?

YABUKI'S STARTING TO TURN HIS PUNCHES INTO CORK-SCREWS...

Y...

IT'S STILL FAINT, BUT.. HE'S GRADUALLY ADDING MORE AND MORE TWISTS WITH EACH PUNCH..

AAH

H-HE DID IT!

HE KNOCKED MENDOZA DOWN AGAIN!

THE CHAMPION'S IN A CRITICAL CRISIS!

IT'S MENDOZA'S SECOND DOWN THIS ROUND, AND FOURTH DOWN FOR THE WHOLE MATCH!

IT'S A DOWN!

PLEASE, JOSÉ!

3!

2!

1!

STAND UP! YOU HAVE TO STAND UP! C'MON! STAND!

JOSÉ! JOSÉ! JOSÉ!

8!

7!

RIGHT...

DODGE TO THE RIGHT!

THE RIGHT!

DID YOU FORGET ABOUT MY ADVICE TO DODGE TO JOE'S RIGHT!?

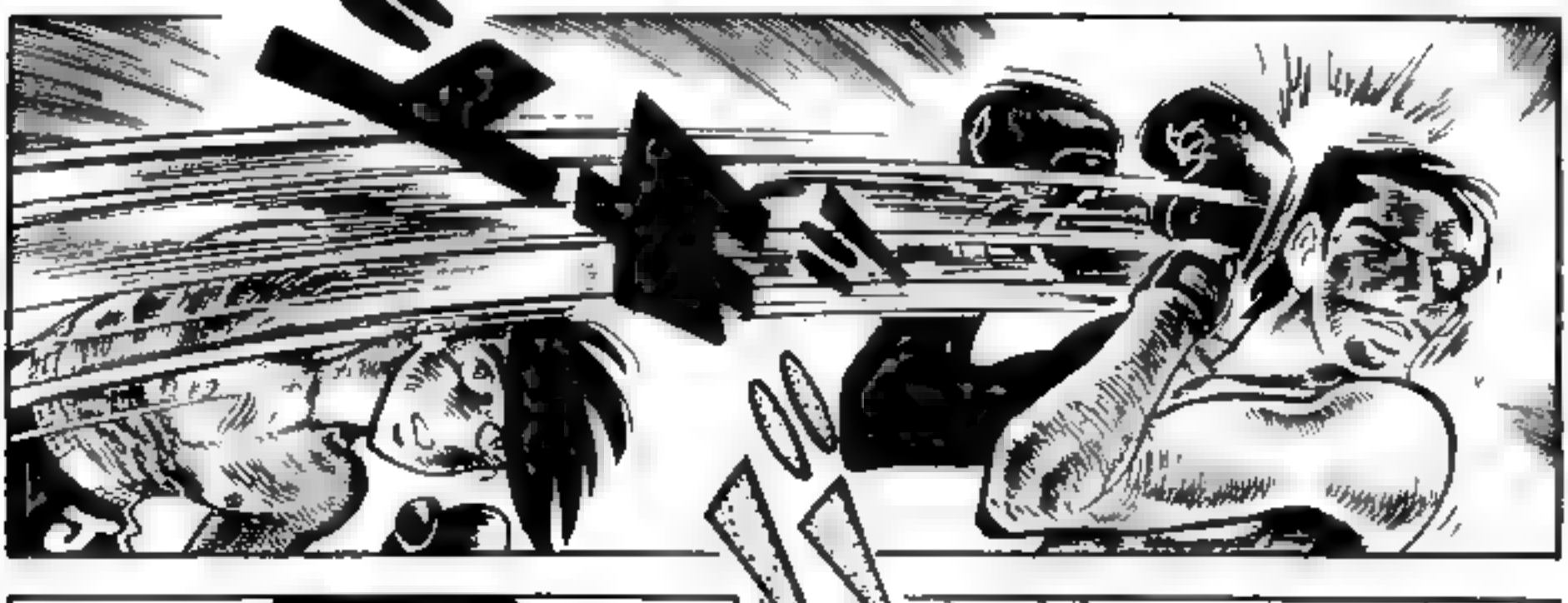
THE WORLD TITLE WILL BE HIS!

IF HE DELIVERS JUST ONE MORE DOWN,

THIS IS A GOLDEN CHANCE FOR YABUKI!

FIGHT!

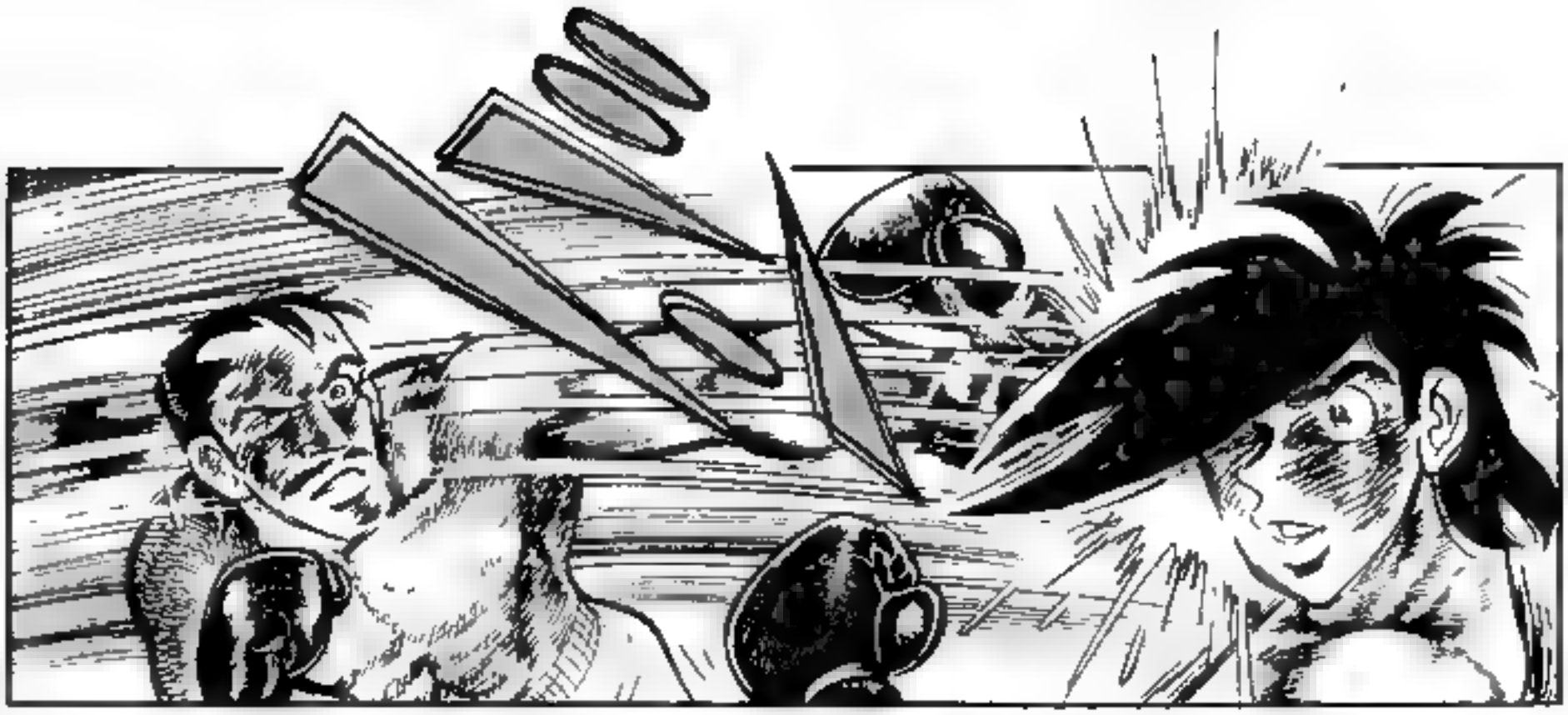
HERE COMES YABUKI!



MOVE TO HIS RIGHT!
THE RIGHT, JOSÉ!

AGHH-

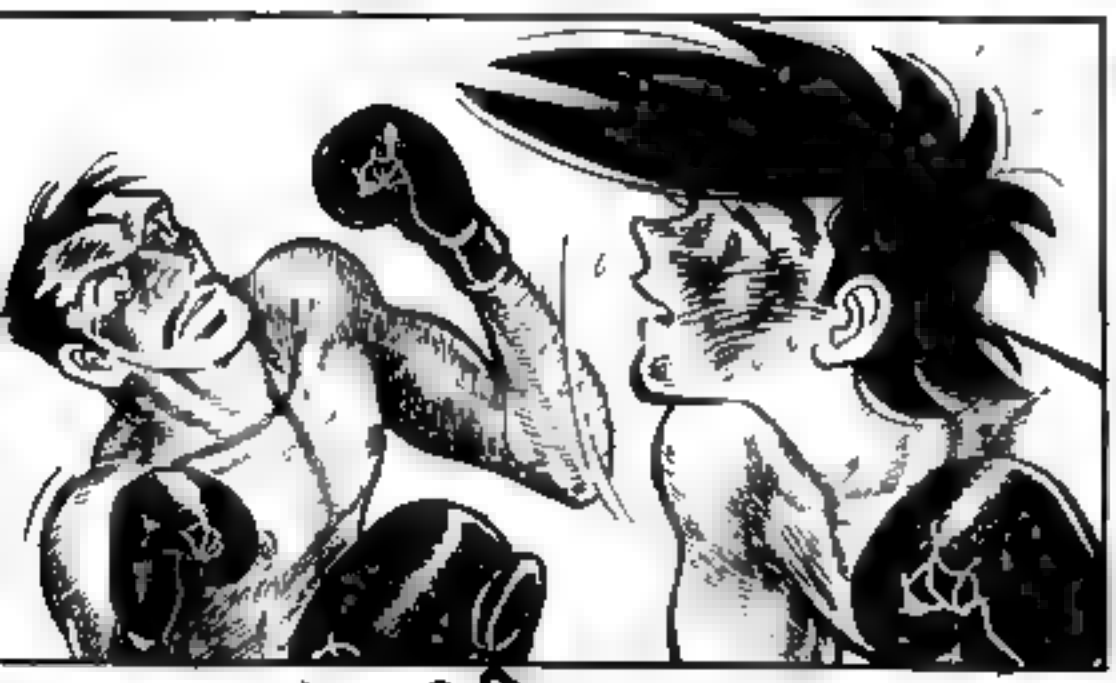
HUFF
HUFF



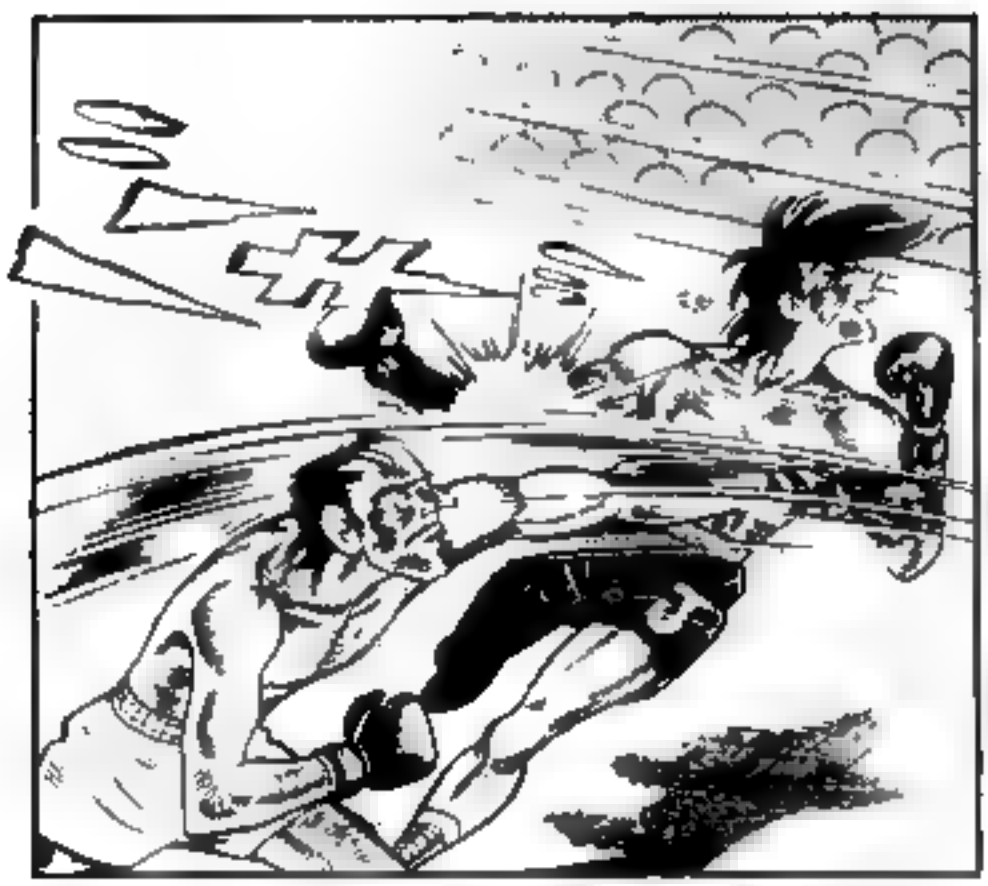
OOF-

HAHH!

HUFF...
HUFF
HUFF



HE'S TO YOUR RIGHT!
W-WHERE ARE YOU LOOKIN', JOE!?
CAN'T YOU SEE HIM!?



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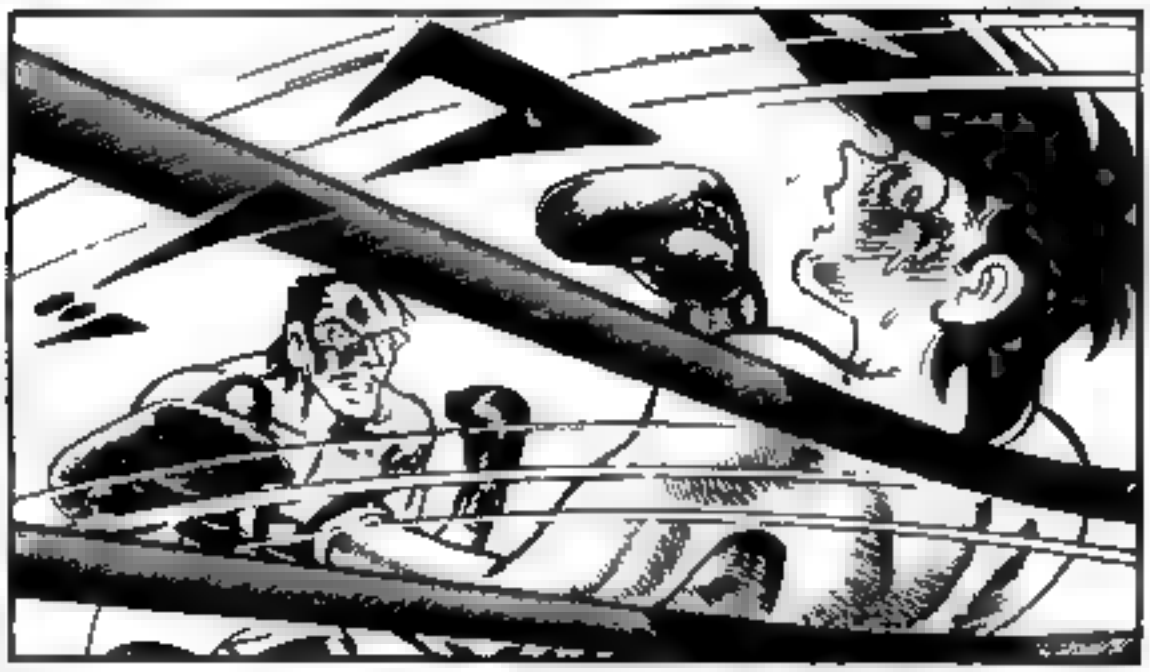
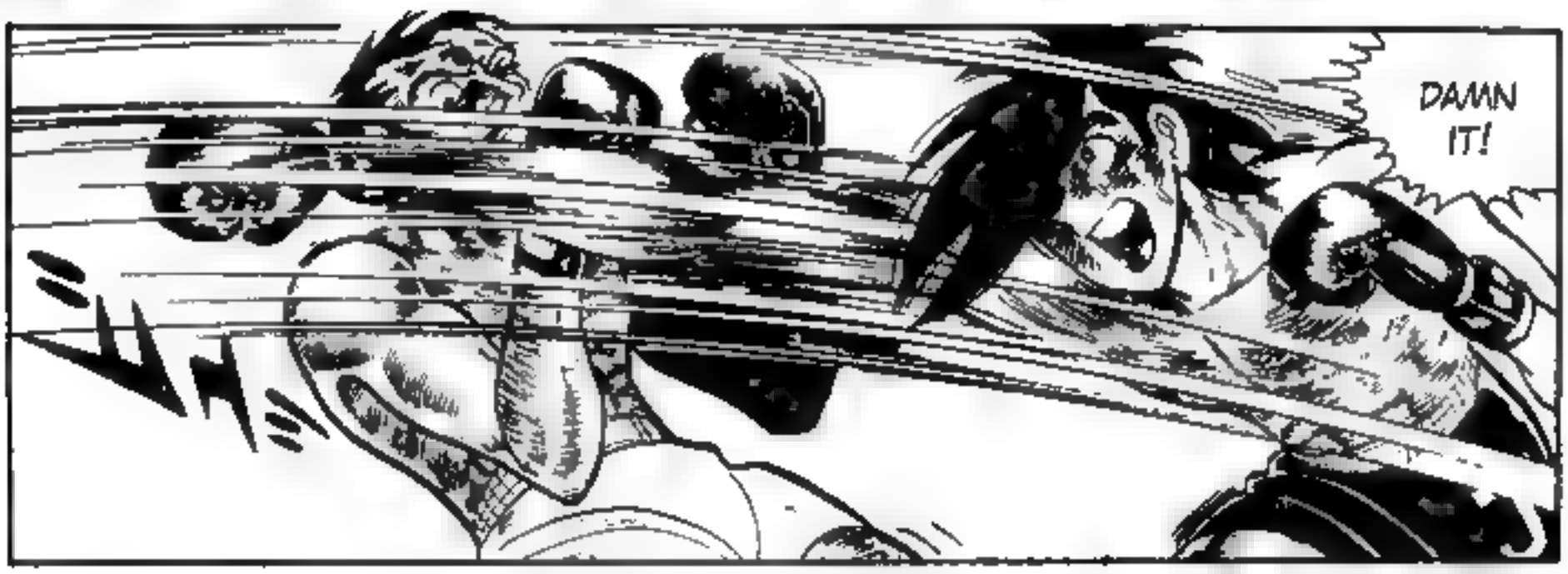



DAMN IT!

NGHH...

HUFF

HUFF..

HUFF

DING!

AWWW...

MENDOZA COULD BARELY STAND ANYMORE! HOW COULD YOU LET HIM GET AWAY!?

WHAT THE HELL!

WAKE UP OUT THERE, YABUKI!

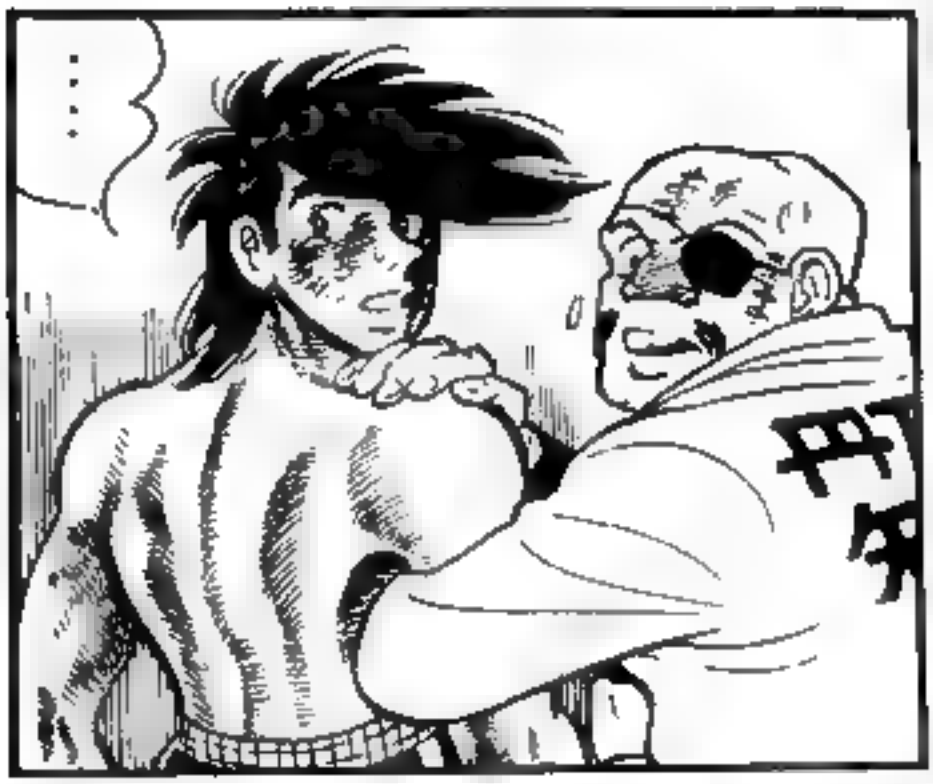
J-JOE...!

RIGHT!

THE SPONGE!

GOOD JOB!

THAT'S ALL YOU GOTTA DO, JOSÉ!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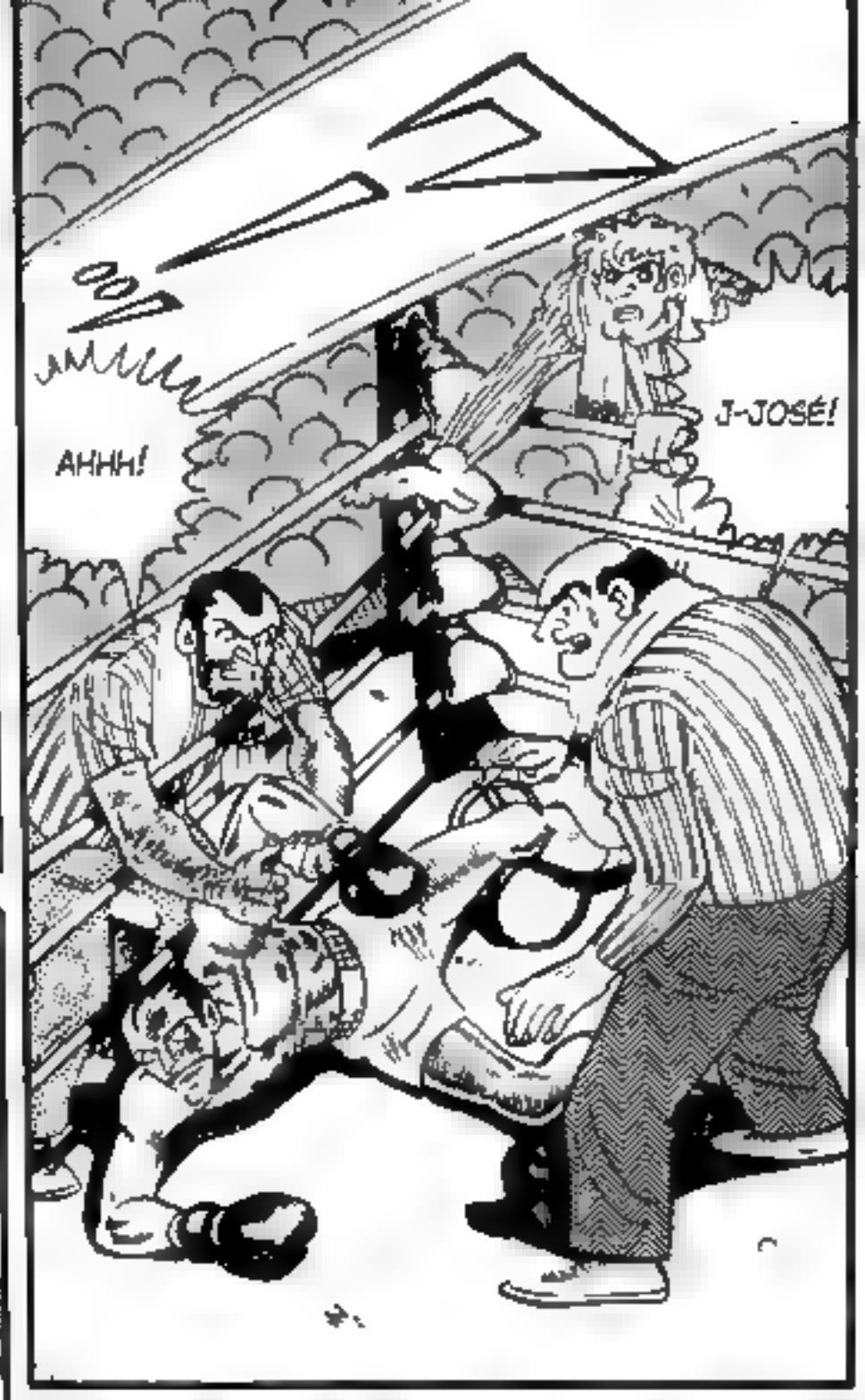

AHHH!
J-JOSÉ!

YOU HAD US SHOUTING FOR JOY IN ONE MOMENT, AND THEN CRYING IN PANIC AT THE NEXT MOMENT!
W... WHAT HAPPENED OUT THERE, JOE!?
I FEEL LIKE I'M LOSING MY MIND HERE!

MORE LIKE IT'S NOT ACTIN' UP AT ALL... IN ONE EYE, THAT IS.

YOUR EYE'S ACTIN' UP AGAIN NOW, IS IT..?
DON'T TELL ME,
J-JOE...

BUT THANKS TO THAT, MY PUNCHES KEPT SWERVING TO THE SIDE, WHICH IS HOW I MANAGED TO GET ALL THOSE HITS ON HIM.

HAHA...

T-THEN...

MENDOZA DOUBLY SO, I'D EXPECT.

I WAS SUR-PRISED AT FIRST...

I WON'T BE GETTING ANY MORE FREEBIE HITS NOW.

YEAH... JUST A LITTLE BEFORE THE ROUND ENDED, MENDOZA STARTED ATTACKING FROM THE BLIND SPOT TO MY RIGHT.

TRUTH ABOUT YOUR EYE-SIGHT?

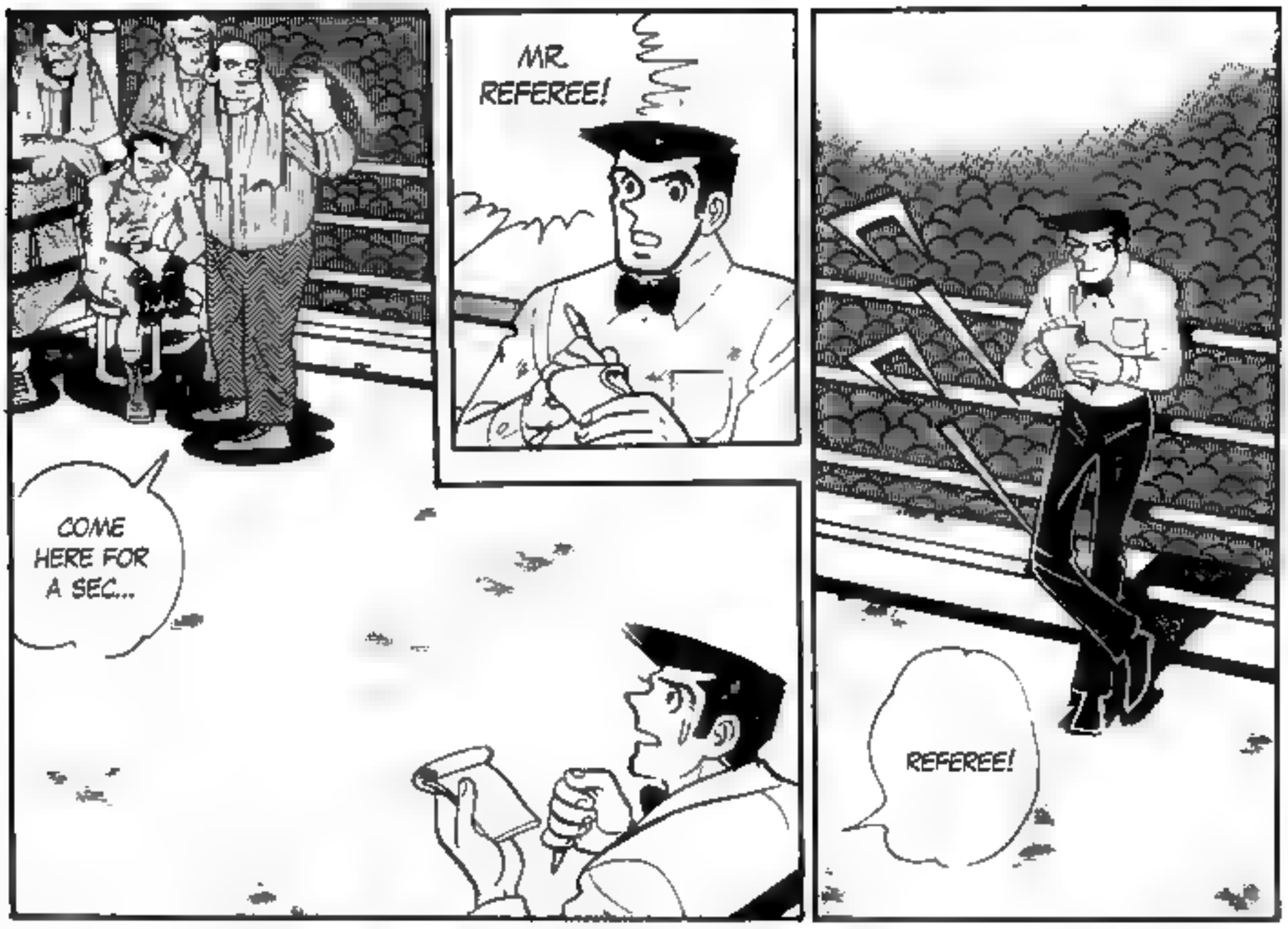
HAVE THEY REALIZED,

I'LL MANAGE SOMEHOW!

I CAN STILL SEE OUTTA ONE EYE. I'M JUST LIKE YOU NOW!

DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT.

BUT YOUR EYE.


COME HERE FOR A SEC...
MR. REFEREE!
REFEREE!

HE BELIEVES IT'D BE UNWISE TO PLAY OUT THE REMAINING ROUNDS.
THAT THE MATCH IS NOW DECIDED.
JOSÉ HERE SAYS,
YES, WHAT IS IT?
ARE YOU SERIOUS...?
WE'RE REQUESTING THE OTHER SIDE TO FORFEIT
NO, NO, NO...
YOU'RE FORFEITING?
Y...

ALL SECONDS OFF THE RING!

IT'S TIME FOR THE 7TH ROUND!

NO, WAIT!

HE'S QUITE THE COMPASSIONATE BOXER, YOU KNOW.

MY JOSÉ'S SAYING THIS BECAUSE HE DOESN'T WANT TO HURT YABUKI ANY FURTHER.

SLAM

THIS IS ABSURD!

DESPITE HIS FUMBLE TOWARDS THE END, ROUND 6 CLEARLY ENDED IN YABUKI'S FAVOUR!

IF YOU CONTINUE THIS MATCH, I'M AFRAID SOMETHING DISASTROUS WILL-

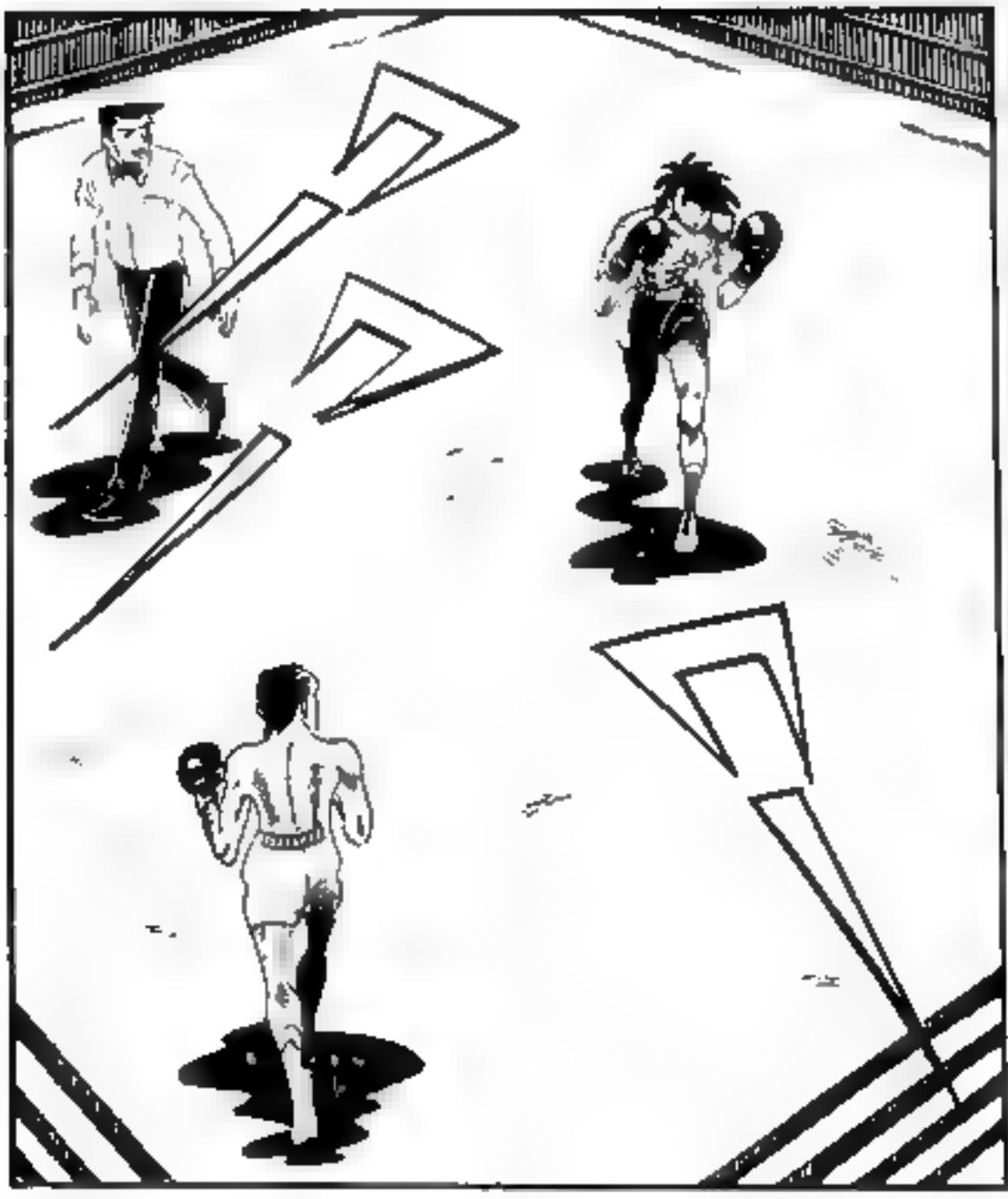
JOE YABUKI'S BODY IS NO LONGER IN ANY SHAPE TO FIGHT.

THAT'S ENOUGH! IF YOU DON'T STEP OFF THE RING THIS INSTANT, THAT'LL BE A PENALTY!

...

WELL, THAT'S HOW IT IS, JOSÉ...

AH...



HERE I GO!

I'VE GOTTA FINISH HIM OFF BEFORE HE RECOVERS..
MENDOZA'S STILL FEELING THE EFFECTS OF ROUND 5 AND 6..

AH-

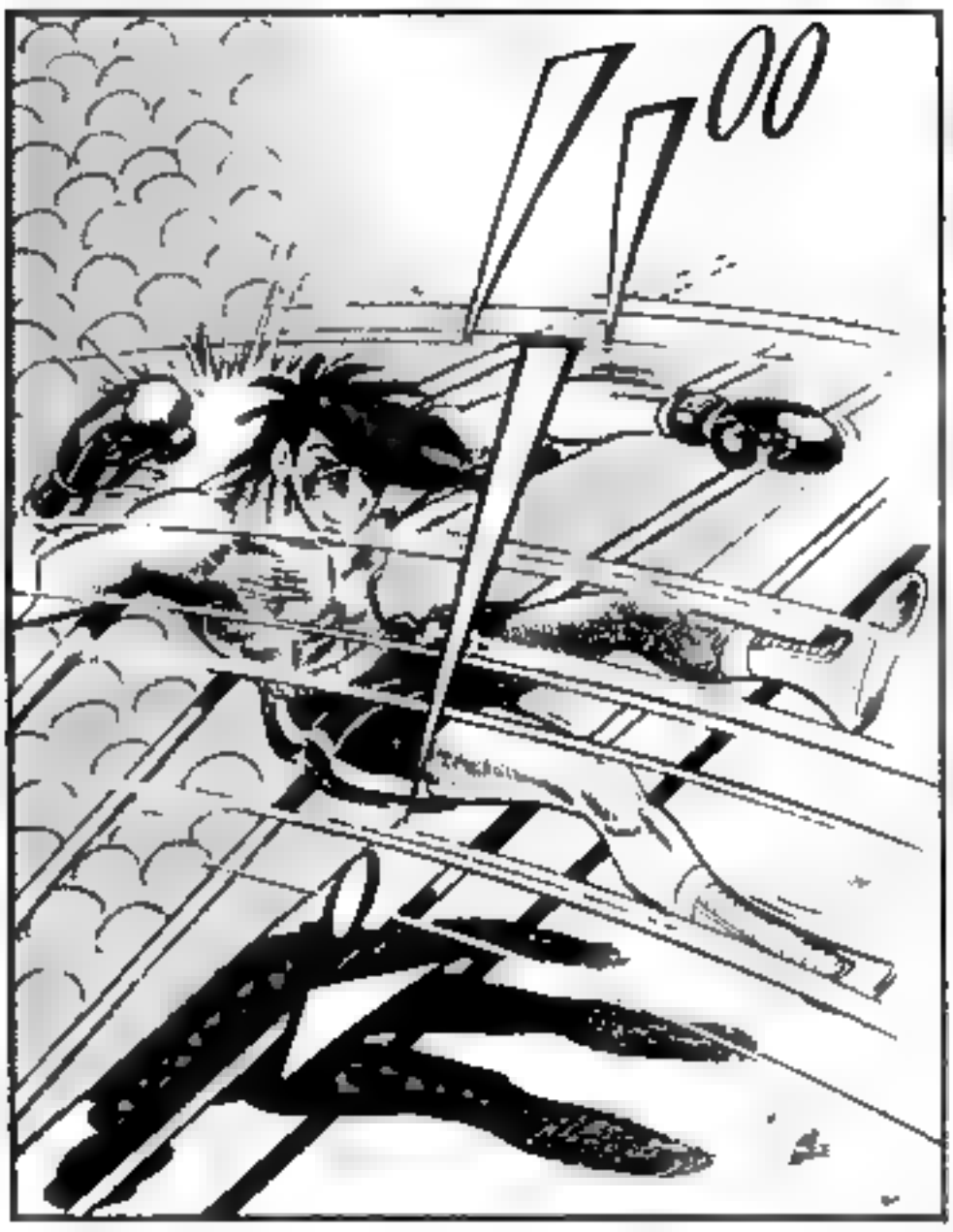
HOW'S THIS!?

TO MY BLIND SPOT!

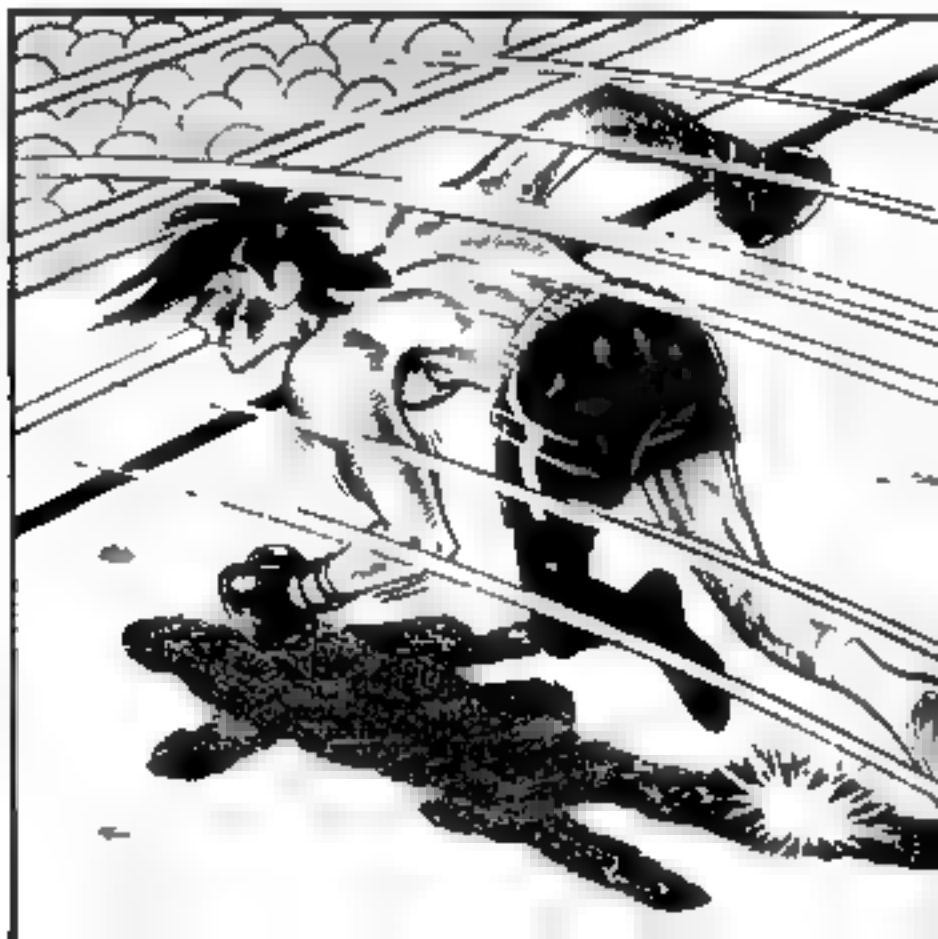
CAN'T LET YOU RUN SO EASILY..

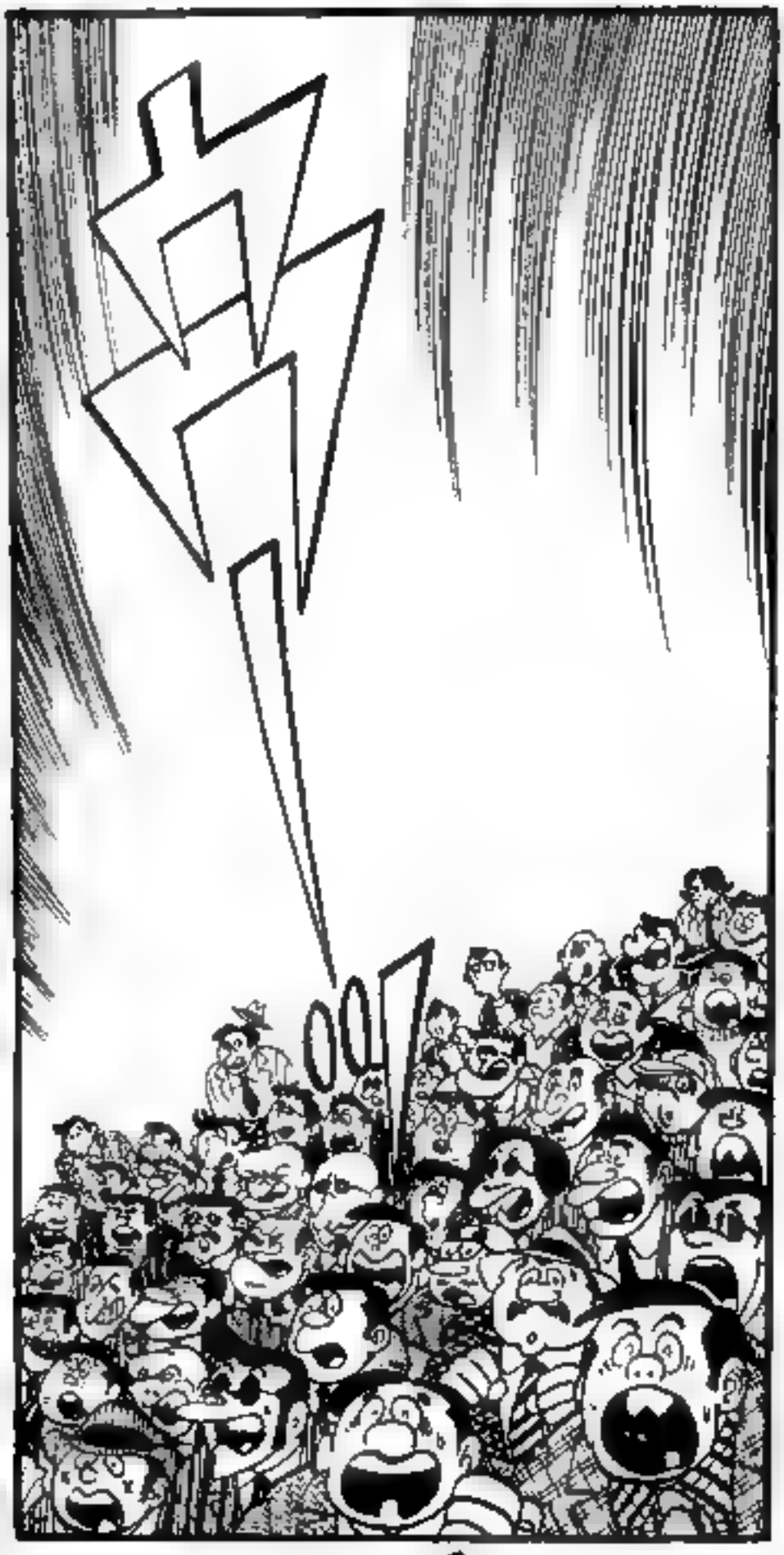
UGH!

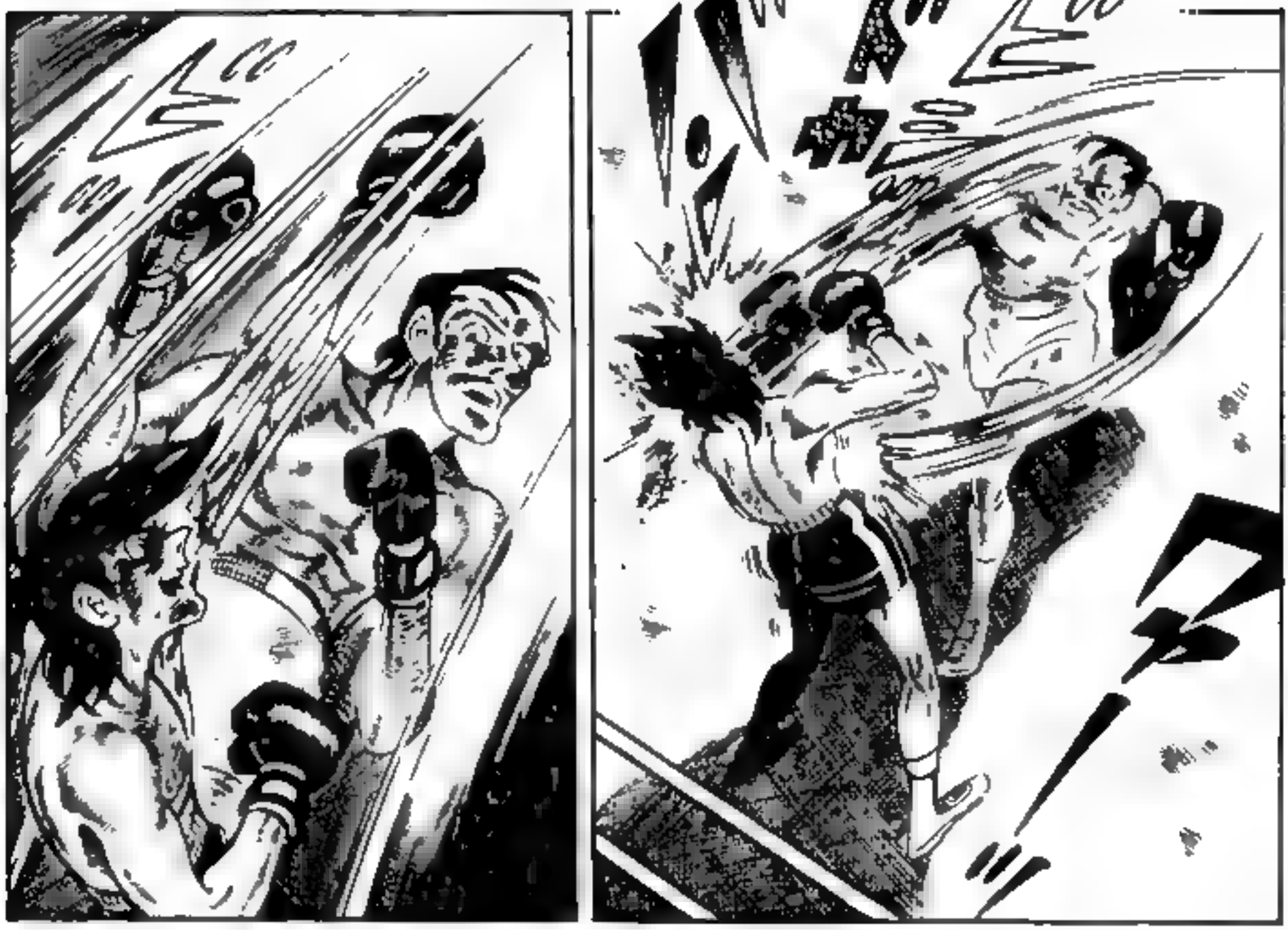
AGHHH!



UGH...







S-STOP!

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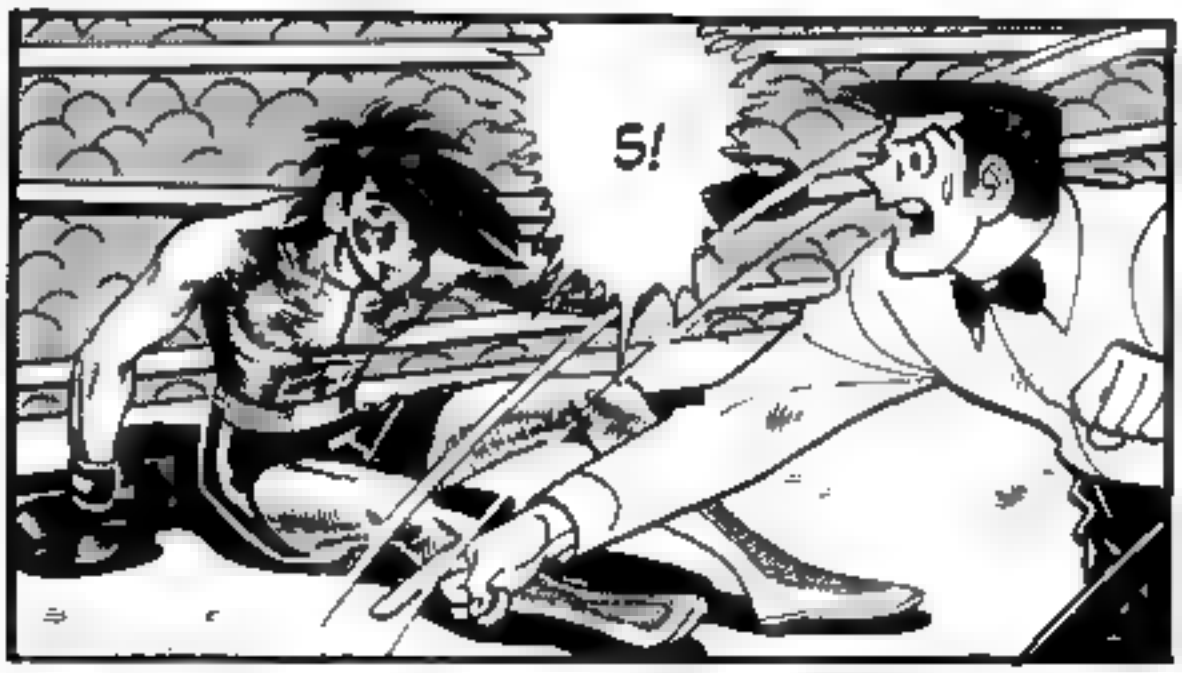
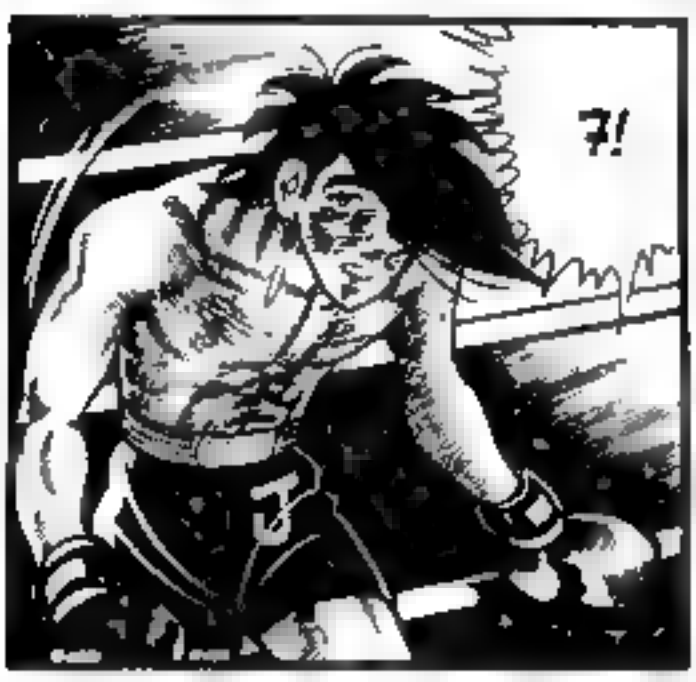
J-JOE...

2!
1!
3!


5!

4!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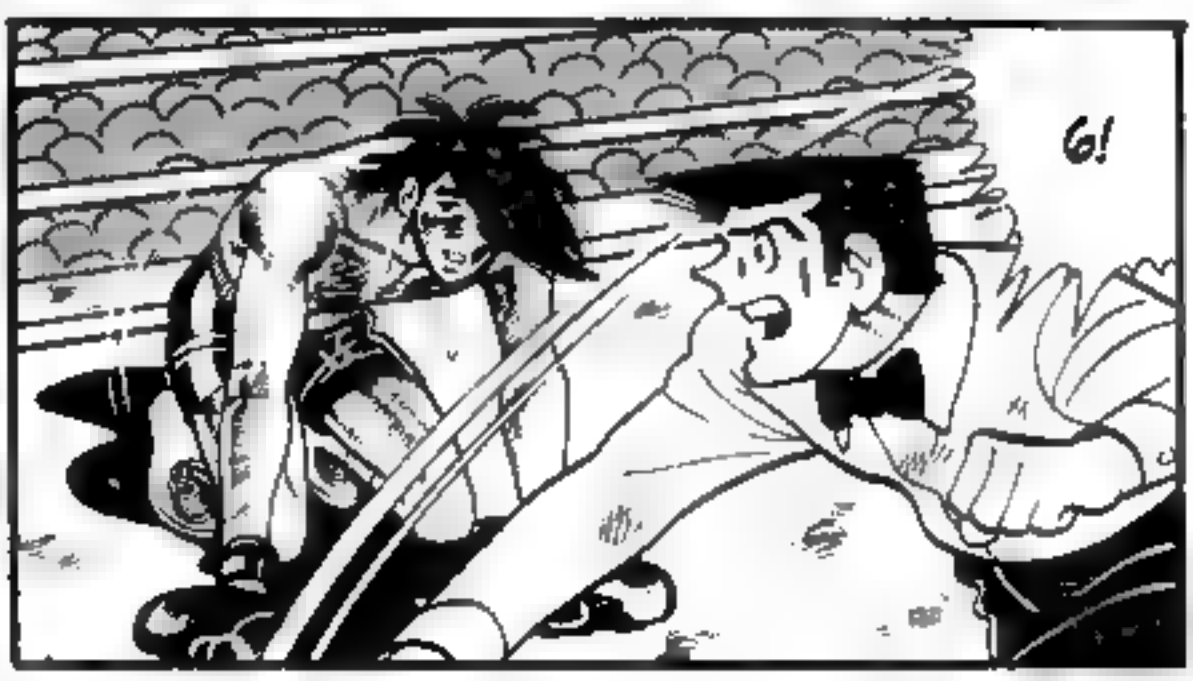

6!

8!

FIGHT!

!!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, YABUKI!?

OH, FOR GOD'S SAKE!

WHY'RE YOU SWINGING AT THE AIR AGAIN!?

TAKE YOUR TIME AND CAREFULLY FINISH HIM OFF!

ALRIGHT! YOU'VE STILL GOT 2 MINUTES LEFT, JOSÉ!

HUFF...

HUFF

HUFF

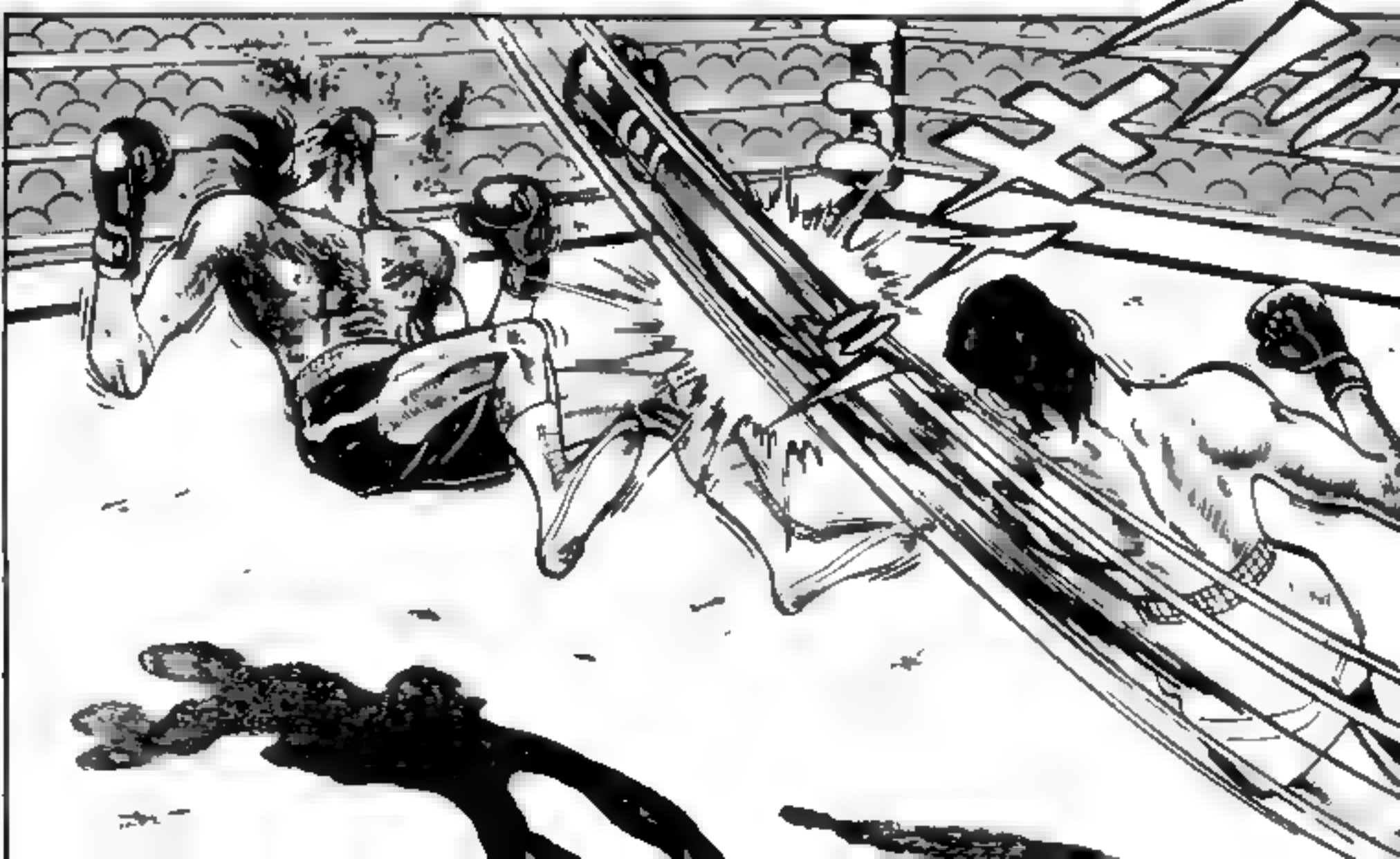
I SAID FIGHT!

ATTACK HIM LIKE THE WAY YOU DID IN ROUNDS 5 AND 6!

DON'T TAKE YOUR EYES OFF HIM!

HANG IN THERE, YABUKI!

KO



S... STOP!

...

AHH!

AGHH...

HE'S TOO STRONG...!

H...

1!

2!

3!

4!

5!

6!

7!

8!

STOP...
I'M READY...!

BARELY EVEN A SCRATCH...

THESE WOUNDS ARE NOTHING.

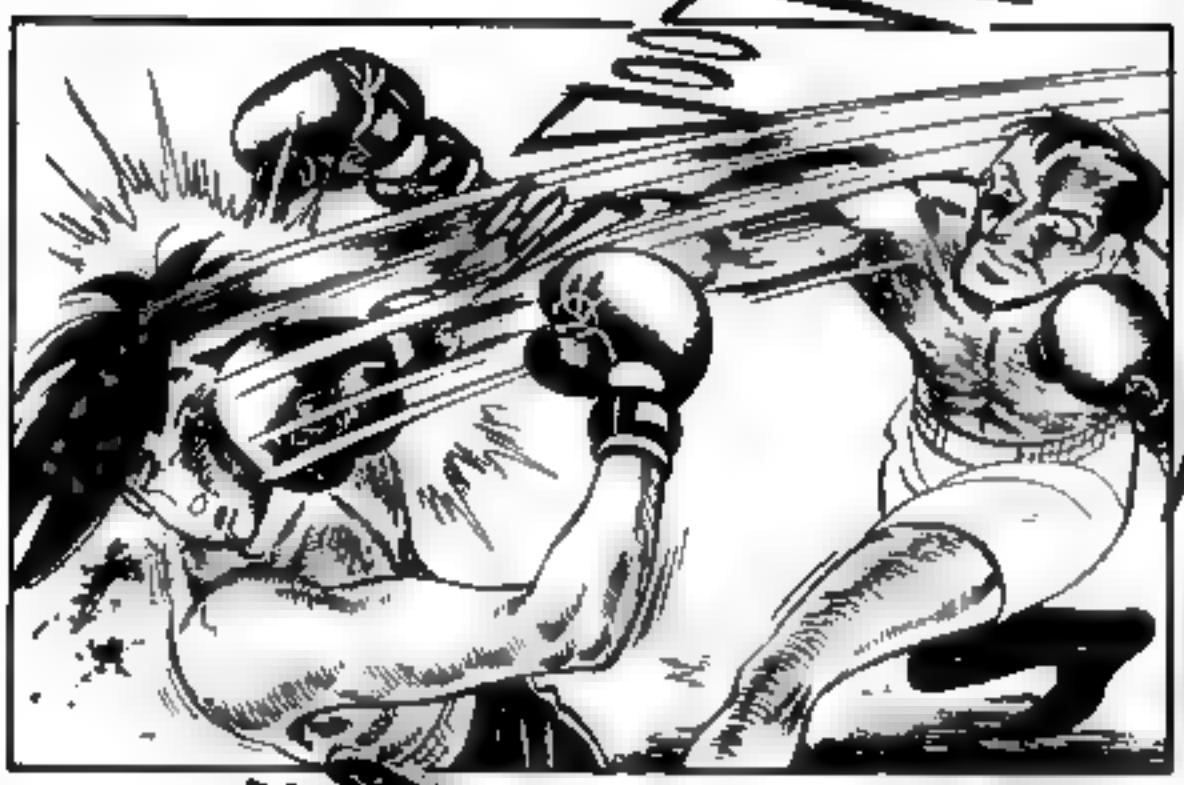
I HAVE TO CHECK-

IT'S FINE.

WAIT!

AH-

F-FIGHT!



IT'S TIME FOR THE FINISH!

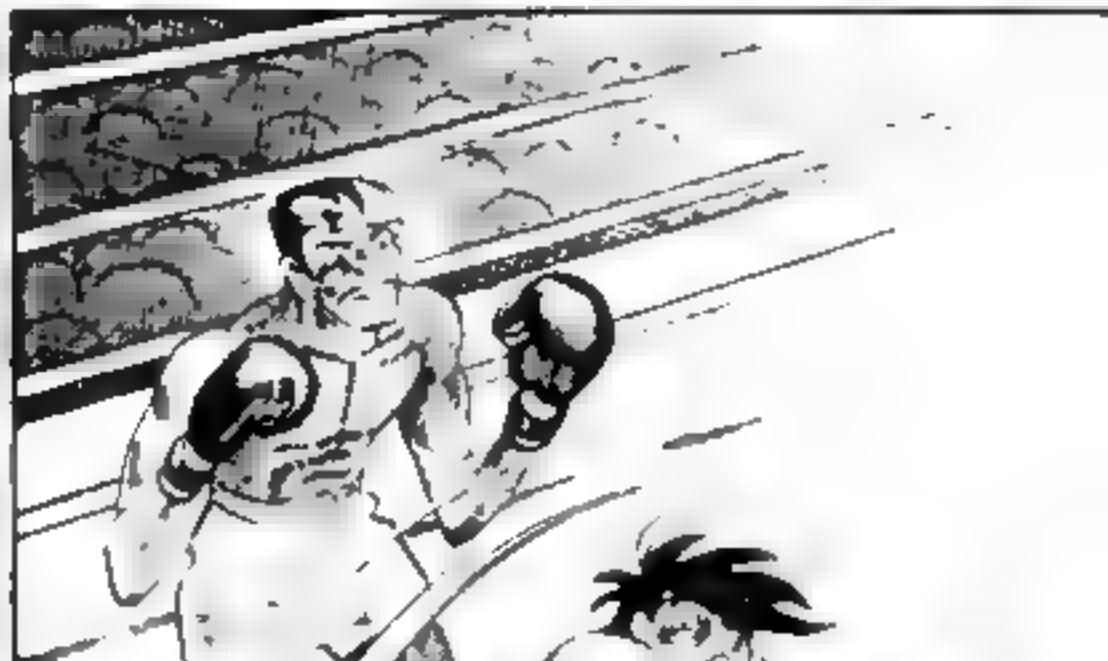
AGHH...

BREAK IT OFF!

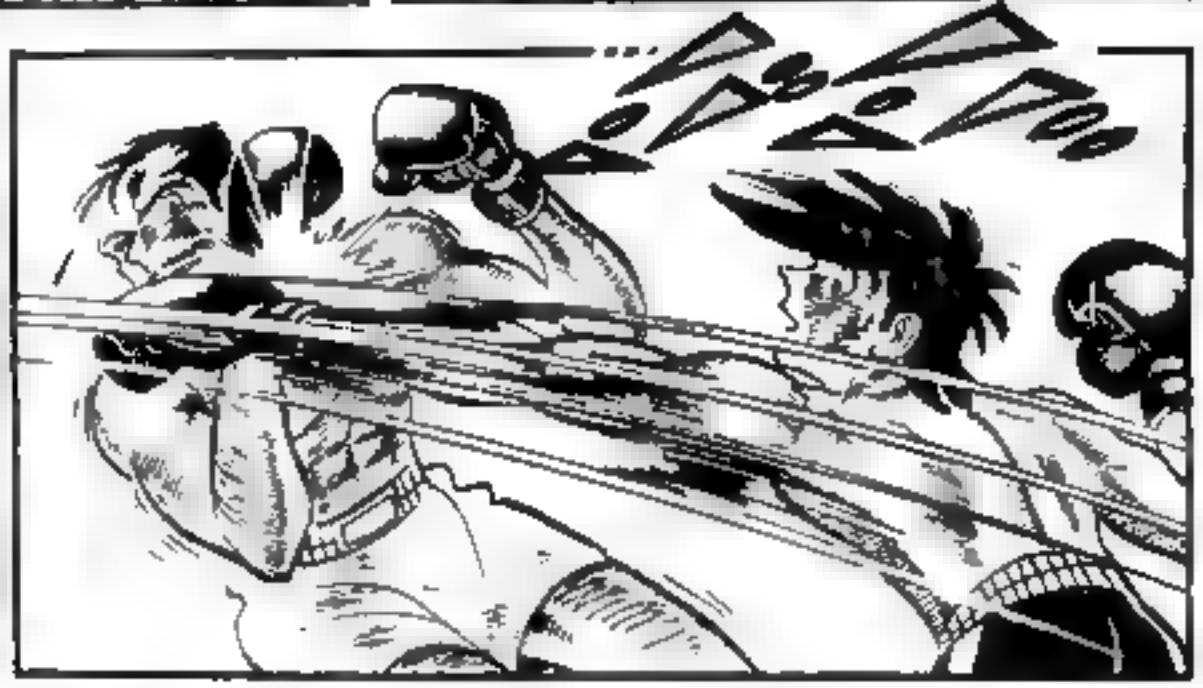
BREAK!

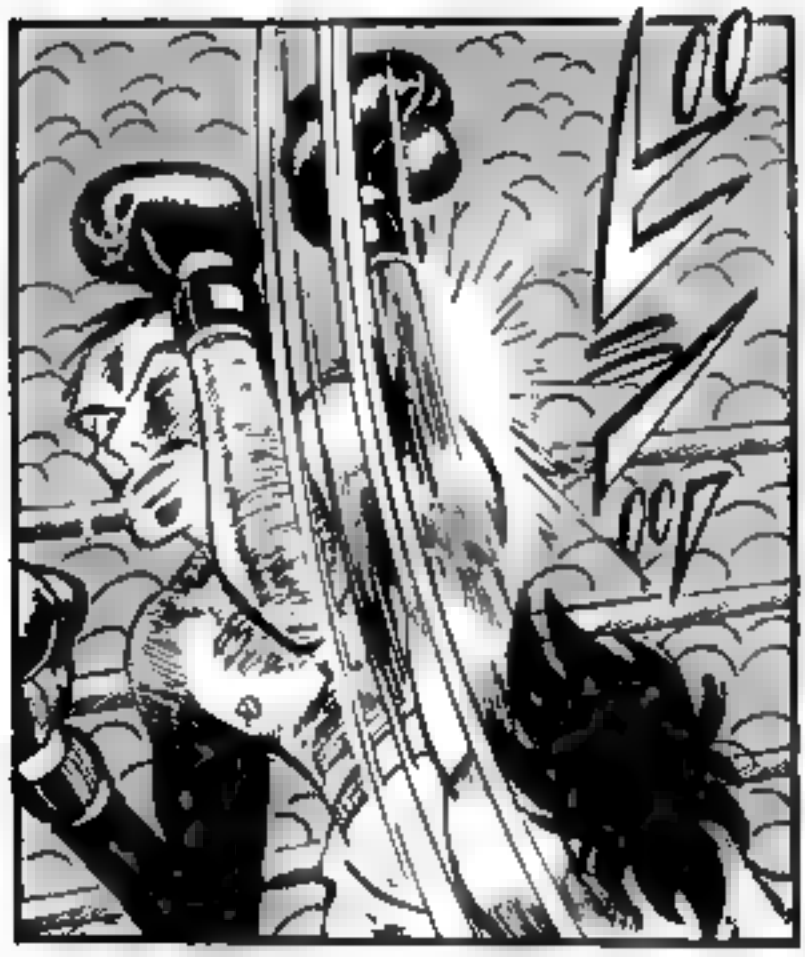
YABUKI! I TOLD YOU TO BREAK IT OFF!

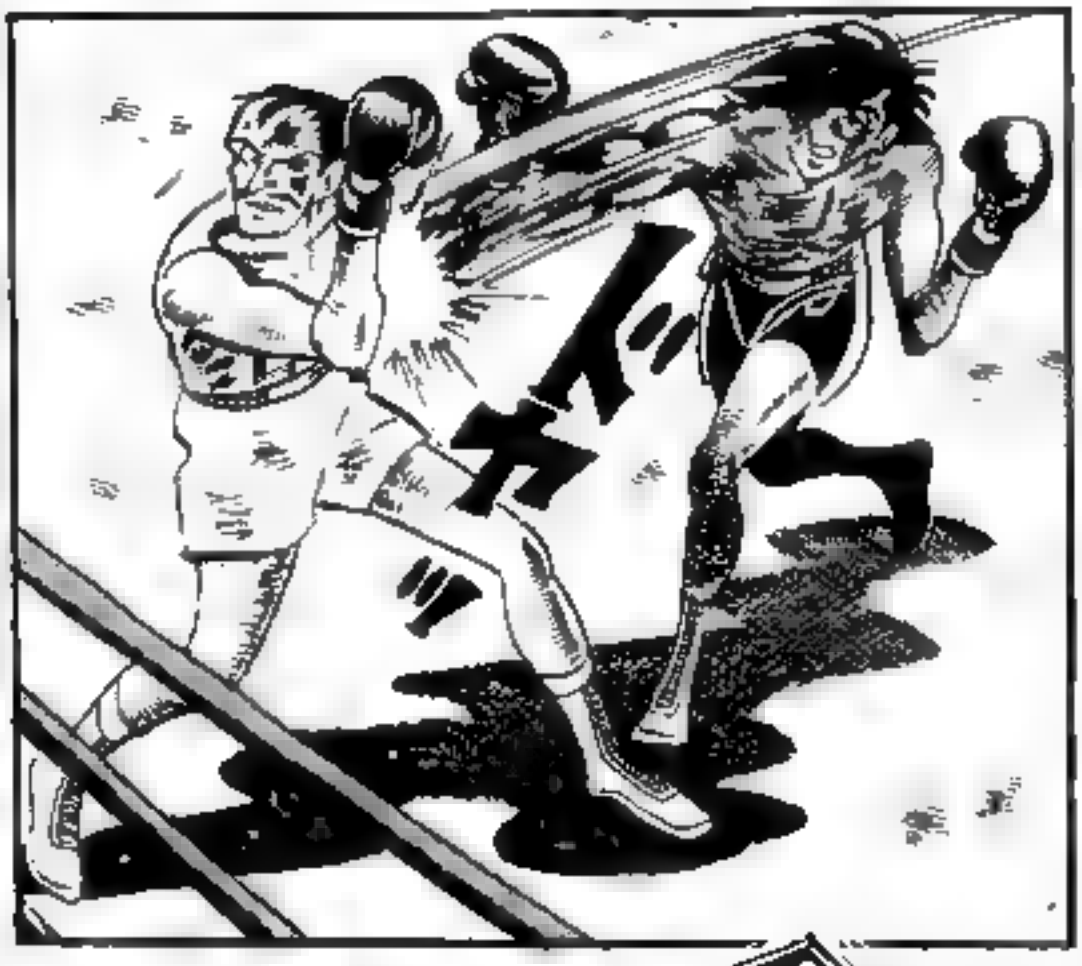
B-BREAK!



OHH!







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007

SLAM

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

BREAK HIM OFF, REF!

HE'S HOLDING MY PLAYER!

T-THAT'S A HOLD, REF!

BREAK IT OFF!

LET GO, YABUKI!

BREAK!

NOOO!

THAT'S PLAYIN' DIRTY, YABUKI!

DING!

AHHH...

STRONG ...

SENPAI!

GET HIM SOME WATER!

STRONG... JOSÉ REALLY IS...

I'M NOT SURE HOW ... COULD'VE CONTINUED ON... HAD I NOT CONVINCED MYSELF OF THAT ..

HA... I KNOW ! CALLED HIM WEAK AT TAKING HITS EARLIER, BUT ..

TRYING TO FIGHT HIM HEAD ON... IS JUST IMPOSSIBLE...

IS THE PERFECT BOXER JOSÉ.

SO LET'S JUST STOP HERE.

YOU FOUGHT BRILLIANTLY DESPITE SEEING FROM ONLY ONE EYE.

E-EVEN UP AGAINST THAT PERFECT BOXER OF A WORLD CHAMPION,

LET'S STOP THIS.

JOE...

I CAN'T HANDLE IT ANYMORE!

I CAN'T BEAR TO WATCH THIS ANY LONGER...

!...

I... STILL HAVEN'T TURNED COMPLETELY WHITE YET.

NOT YET, OLD MAN...

W... WHITE...?

I WONDER WHEN IT WAS...

TURN WHITE?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, JOE?

IT WAS A TIME WHEN I LOST SIGHT OF A CLEAR GOAL AND THE DAYS JUST PASSED ME BY.

IT WAS PROBABLY SOME TIME AFTER THE CARLOS FIGHT AT KOURAKUEN STADIUM...
I THINK.

IF I WOULDN'T GIVE UP BOXING...
NORIKO ASKED ME,
BUT THEN,

YABUKI. . DON'T YOU GET LONELY?

EVEN THOUGH OTHER PEOPLE YOUR AGE GO TO THE BEACH OR MOUNTAINS WITH THEIR LOVERS FOR FUN AND LAUGHTER,

SPENDING ALL YOUR TIME DOING JUMP ROPES, STRETCHING, SHADOW-BOXING, OR HITTING THE SAND-BAGS...

DAY IN AND DAY OUT, YOU'RE STUCK IN A GLOOMY GYM THAT SMELLS OF SWEAT, VASELINE, AND ROSIN.

. . . .

YOU PUNCH OTHERS AND GET ALL BRUISED AND BLOODIED UP IN RETURN, LIKE A COCK IN A COCKFIGHT...

AND ON THAT RING, SURROUNDED BY CIGARETTE SMOKE AND DRUNKEN JEERS,

THE ONLY TIME YOU GET TO GO ANYWHERE BRIGHT IS THAT CAGE CALLED THE BOXING RING, LIT UP BY SO MANY LIGHTS AS TO BE ALMOST BLINDING...

AND EVEN THOUGH YOUR BODY ACHES TO GROW, YOU CAN'T EVER EAT OR DRINK WHAT YOU WANT BECAUSE YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO WATCH YOUR WEIGHT.

I'M NOT FIGHTING JUST BECAUSE OF MY FEELINGS OF DEBT OR OBLIGATION TO OTHERS.

PERHAPS I DIDN'T EXPLAIN MYSELF VERY WELL...

IT'S MISERABLE.

IT'S WRETCHED,

IT'S FAR TOO DARK FOR A PERSON TO CALL IT HIS YOUTH!

I FIGHT, 'CAUSE IN THE END, I LOVE BOXING.

IS SOMETHING I'VE ONLY TASTED ON A BLOODIED RING.

BUT THAT BURNING SENSE OF WORTH AND COMPLETENESS...

IT'S CERTAINLY QUITE A WORLD APART FROM THE BRIGHT YOUTH YOU TALK ABOUT,

ONLY WHITE ASHES REMAIN...

AND WHEN IT'S OVER,

ONLY WHITE ASHES.

NOT EVEN ANY TINY CINDERS...

IT'S SO INTENSE THAT IT BURNS YOUR ENTIRE BODY UP IN AN INSTANT.

AND THIS BURNING SENSATION ISN'T A MOMENTARY SPUTTER THAT OTHERS MY AGE GO THROUGH.

I'VE NEVER FELT ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE I STARTED BOXING.

I'M ACTUALLY FOND OF THE SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT I GET FROM BITING BACK WHILE PRESSED BACK AGAINST THE WALL.

I FIGHT BECAUSE I LOVE TO FIGHT.

I'M NOT FIGHTING ON A SENSE OF DEBT OR OBLIGATION ALONE.

SO YOU SEE,

DO YOU GET ME ?

I CAN STILL FEEL THEIR FLAMES SPUTTER.

I'VE STILL GOT CINDERS LEFT BURNING.

IN SHORT,

UNTIL ONLY WHITE ASHES REMAIN...

DON'T SAY ANYTHING ELSE,

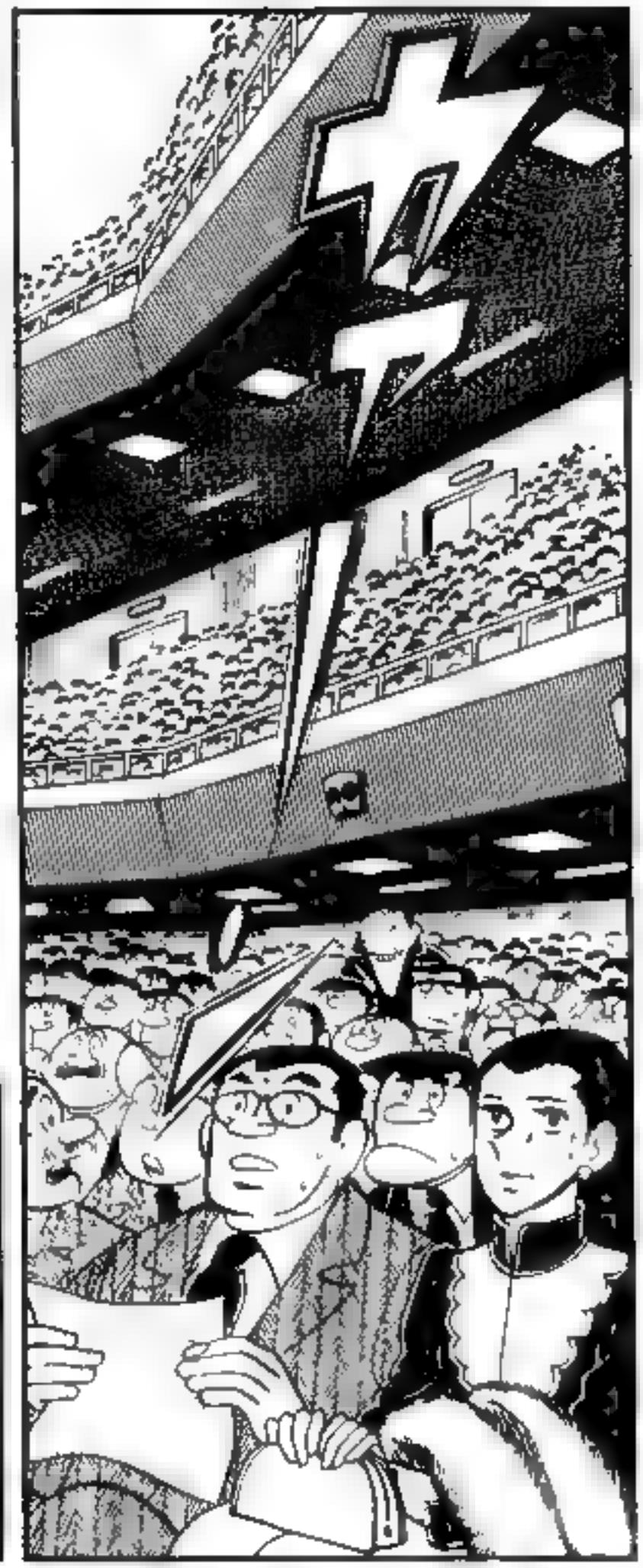
IT'S AN EARNEST REQUEST.

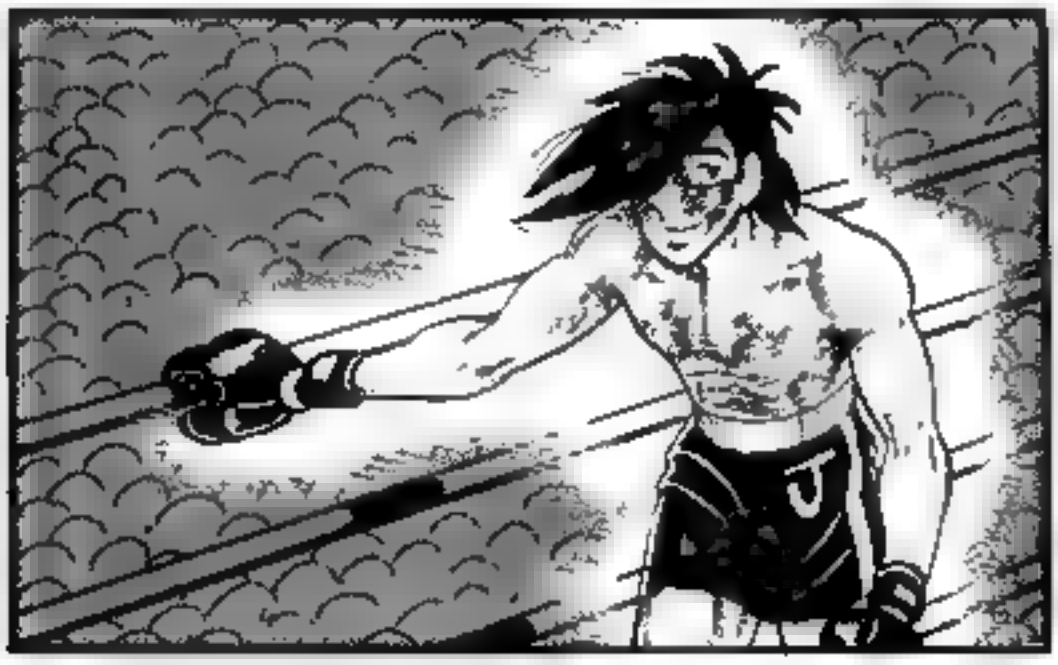
PLEASE.

EVEN WITH THAT BODY?

SO YOU'LL STILL FIGHT?

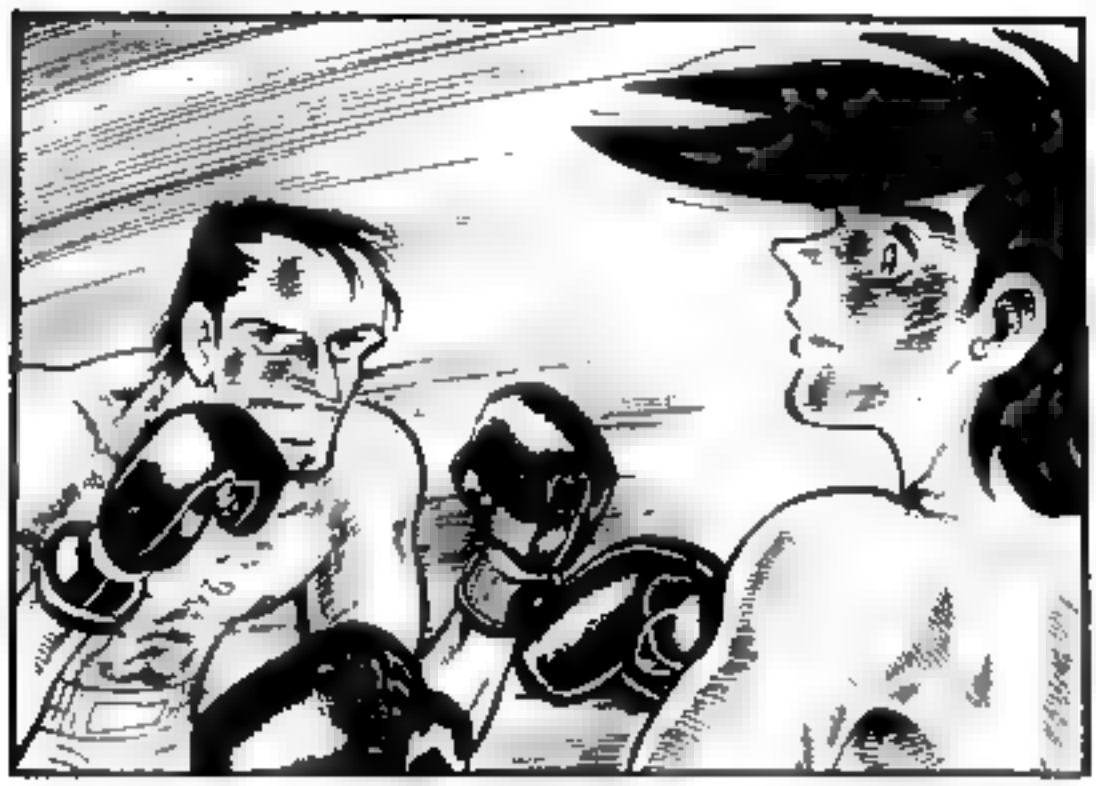
J... JOE...





I WOULD HAVE THROWN IN THE TOWEL LONG AGO...
IF I WERE HIS SECOND,

THIS MAY TURN GRUESOME...
MN...
IT SEEMS YABUKI AND HIS CORNER ARE STILL SET ON FIGHTING...

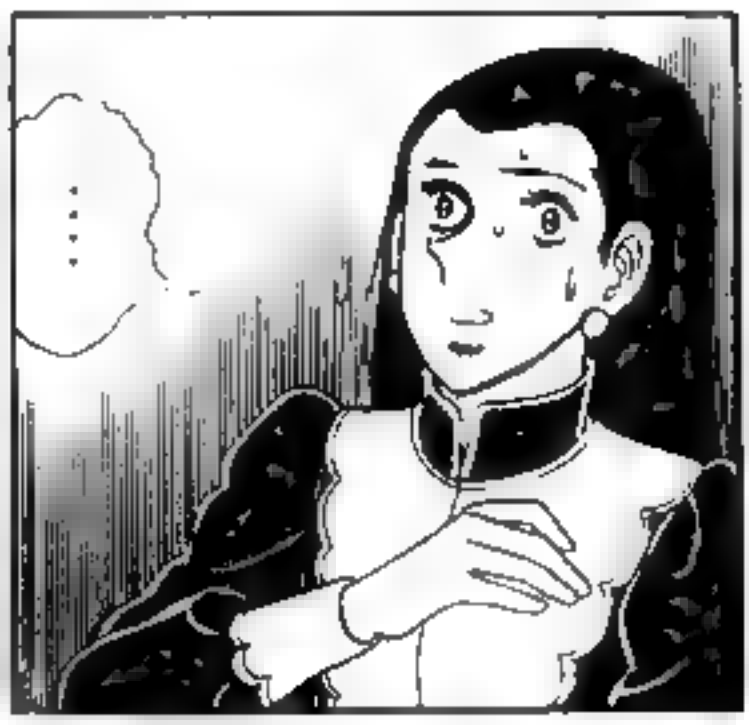


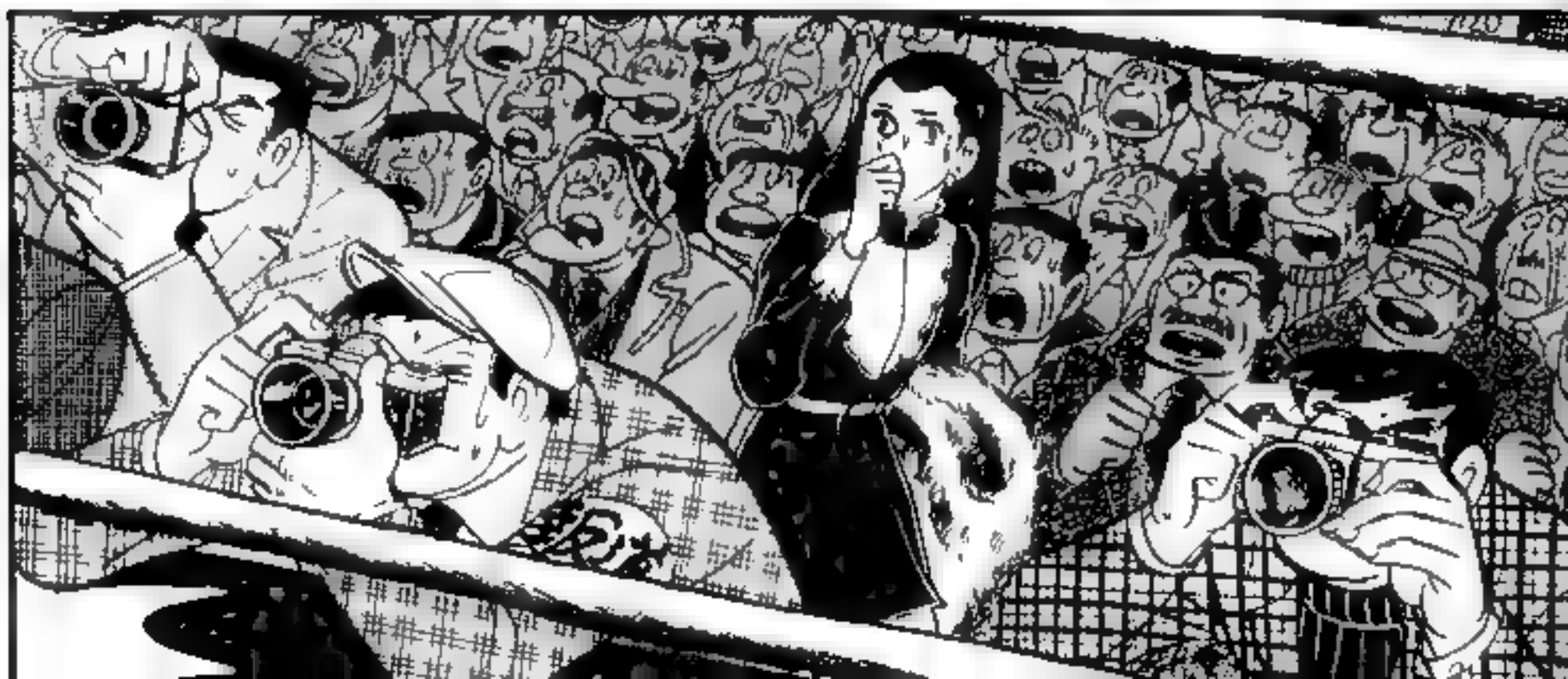
KO!!

KO!!

UGH!

KO!!





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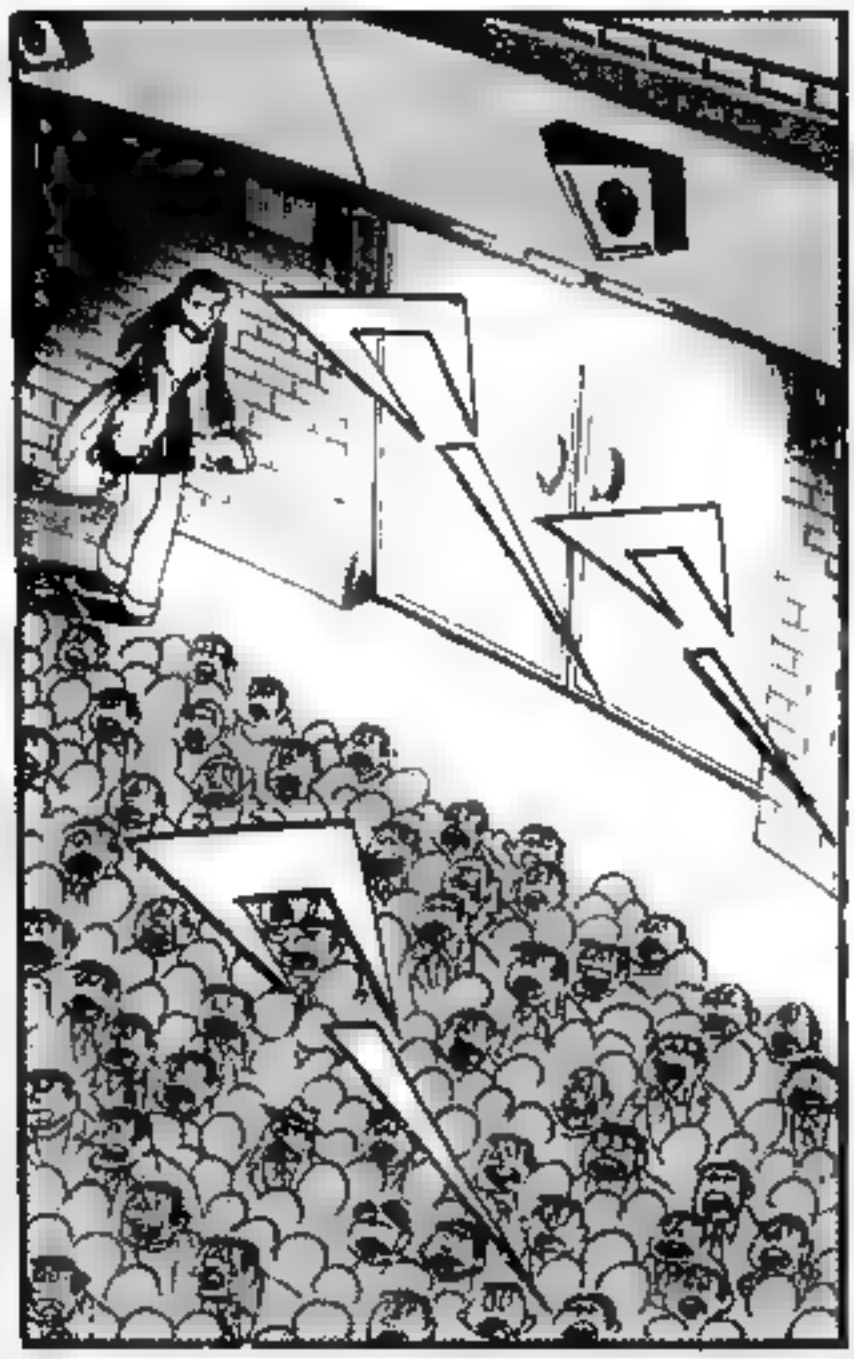
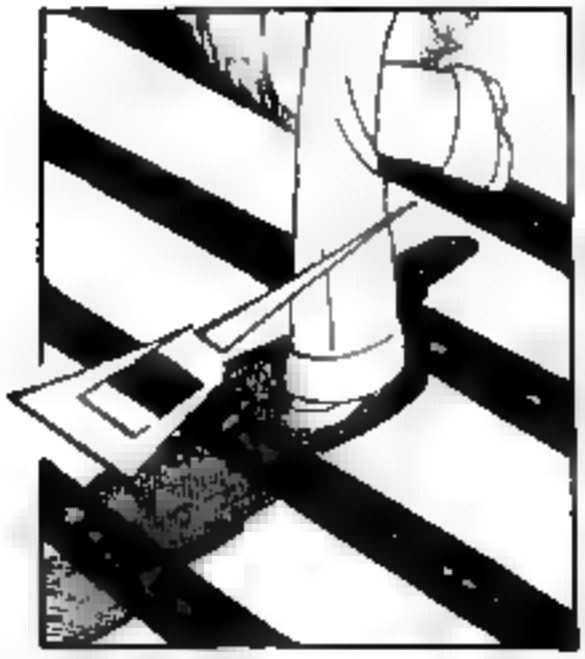




THE FIGHT HAS NOW TURNED INTO A ONE-SIDED SLAUGHTER!

YABUKI IS DOWN!

YABUKI SLUMPS DOWN, UNABLE TO WITHSTAND THE CHAMPION'S FIERCE BARRAGE ANY LONGER!

CAN YABUKI STAND IN TIME!?

THE REFEREE BEGINS HIS COUNT-DOWN!

TURN OFF THE RADIO...

PLEASE...

YOU'RE RETURNING ALREADY!?

M-MISS SHIRAKI!?

I DON'T CARE! JUST QUICKLY TAKE ME ANYWHERE NOT HERE!

OR TO THE GYM..?

SHOULD I TAKE YOU HOME?

Y-YES, MA'AM.

IS DONE FOR...

YABUKI,

HE WAS JUST A SECOND AWAY FROM A KO-WIN BACK THEN...

HE WAS DOING SO WELL IN ROUNDS 5 AND 6 TOO...

Y-YES...

TURN THE RADIO BACK ON!

HM?

T-TURN IT ON...

BLOODY FACE WITHSTANDING, HE STILL PUTS UP A DESPERATE STAND!

YABUKI STILL WON'T GIVE UP!

YABUKI STILL FIGHTS!

HE STAGGERS WILDLY!

YABUKI'S LEGS STUMBLE!

AHHHH!
AND ANOTHER CORK-SCREW PUNCH LANDS SQUARELY IN YABUKI'S FACE!

BUT THE CHAMPION'S PUNCHES ARE BECOMING SHARPER AND SHARPER!

AHH-

EVEN WITH A BADLY BRUISED BODY THAT LOOKS AS IF IT'LL FAIL ON HIM ANY SECOND NOW, YABUKI ATTACKS!

AHH! YABUKI'S RETURNS FIRE!

HE STILL STANDS!

I REPEAT, HE DOES NOT GO DOWN!

BUT HE DOES NOT GO DOWN!

HE'S TRAPPED LIKE A RAT!

YABUKI'S IN DANGER!

MENDOZA'S DRIVEN YABUKI BACK TO THE ROPES AGAIN! HE UNLEASHES A FLURRY OF HOOKS!

BUT THE CHAMPION DEFTLY SWAYS BACK, DODGING ALL HIS PUCHES!

HE'S CALLED A ROPE DO-

AHH! THE REFEREE BREAKS THEM APART!

T-TURN IT OFF!

HURRY BACK TO THE STADIUM!

PLEASE...

PARDON?

THE CAR AROUND TO BUDOKAN..

TURN..

I'M RUNNING AWAY LIKE THAT TIME BEFORE,

LOOK AT ME..

EVEN THOUGH I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS MATCH

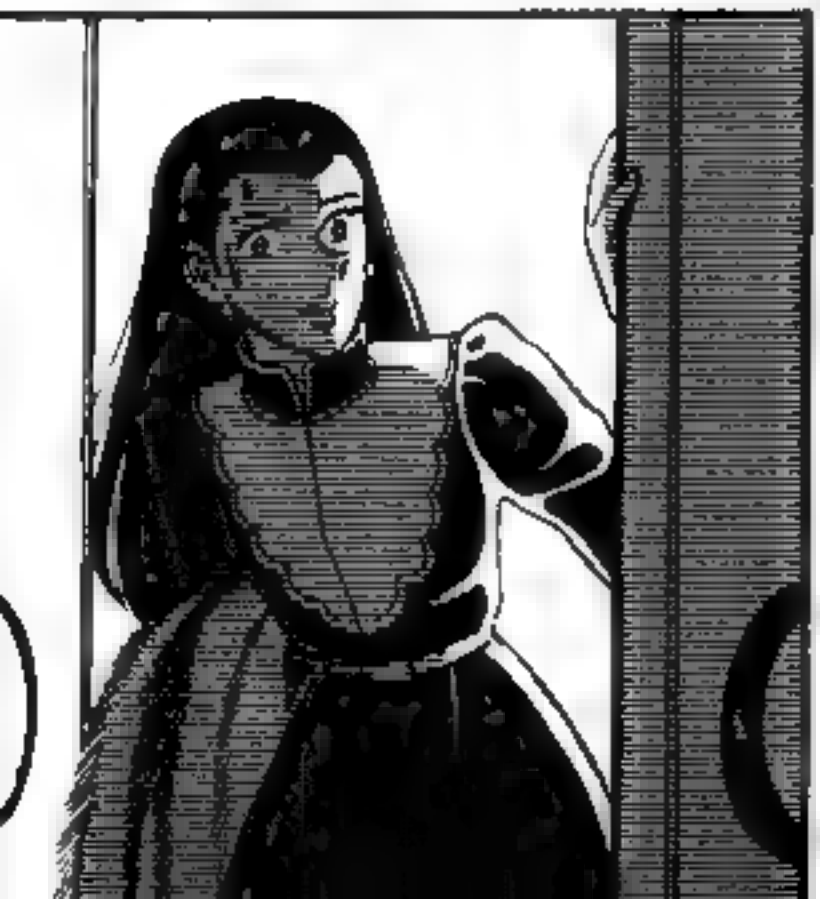
I WON'T RUN AWAY!

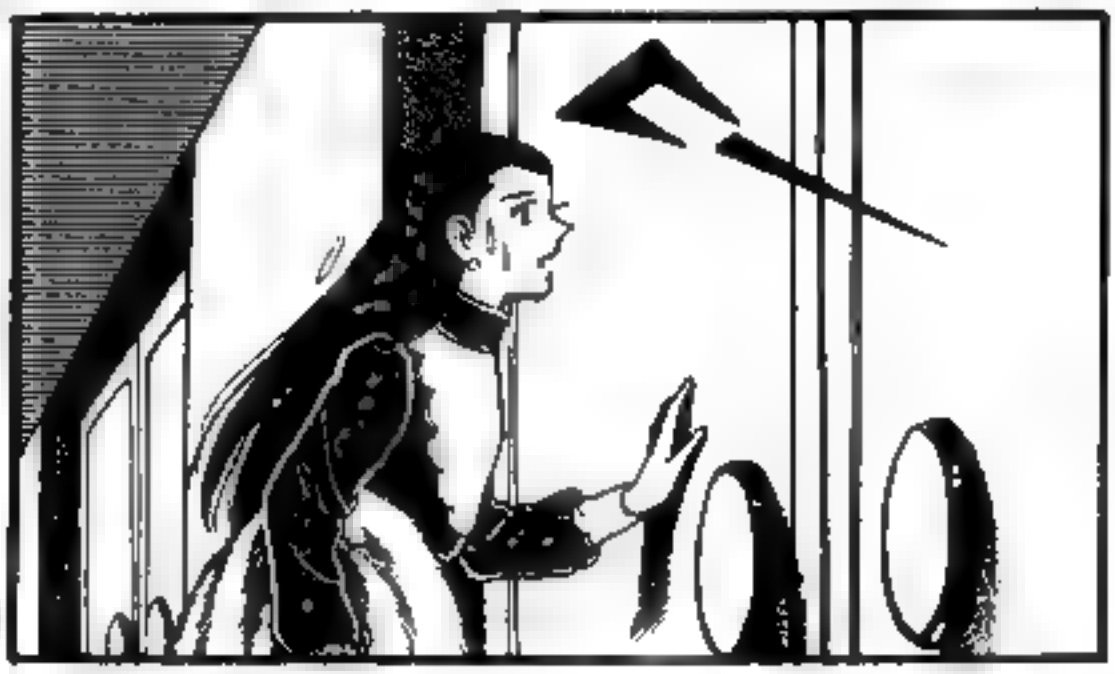
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS MATCH... AND NO MATTER WHAT RESULTS FROM IT...

BUT I WON'T RUN ANY MORE.

FORGIVE ME, YABUKI.

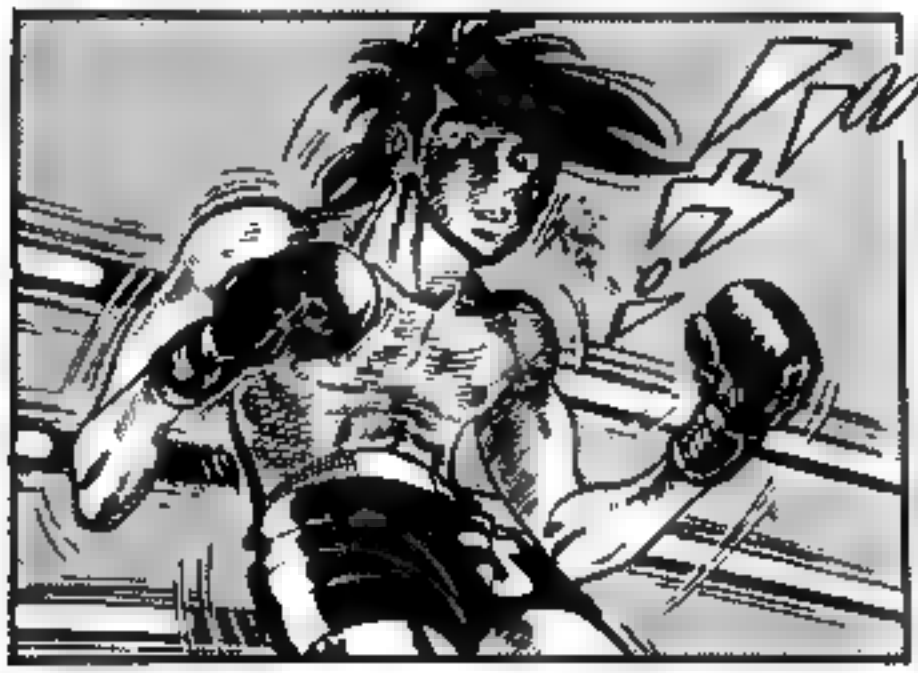
I MAY NOT MAKE IT BACK IN TIME...
BUT... EVEN IF I TRY TO HEAD BACK NOW...

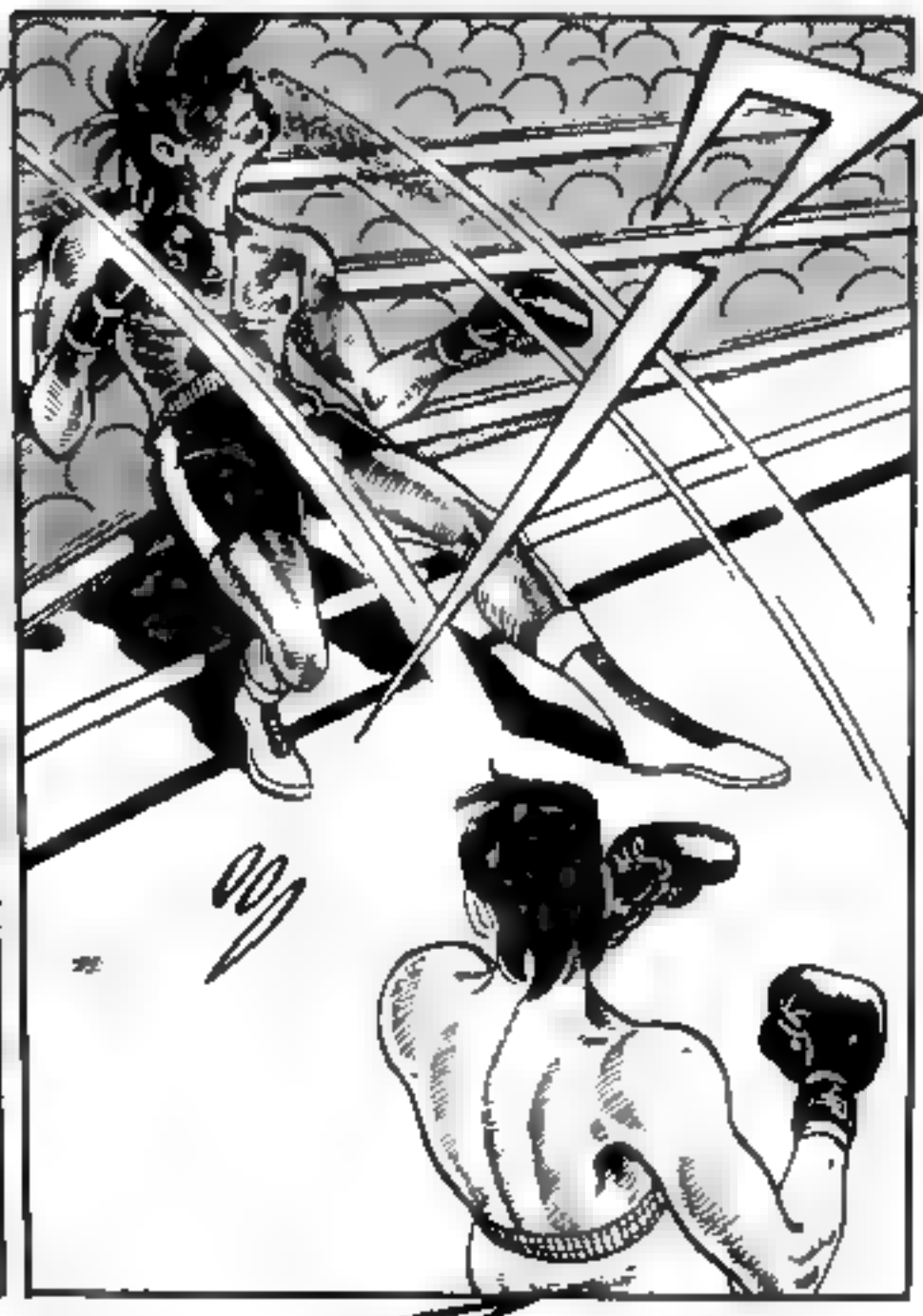




SUNTORY
ドガッ

007





AGHH!

AHHH...

AGH!

M-MENDOZA'S OVER THERE!

J-JOE!

DING!

ROUND 12 IS OVER!

EXCUSE US THEN.

S-SORRY ABOUT THAT, REF...

JOSÉ...

JOE YABUKI...

IS...

HO ME

DOES HE HAVE NO ONE... TO WEEP FOR HIM...?

NOT AFRAID AT ALL... OF DYING OR BECOMING CRIPPLED...?

I HAVE MY LOVING FAMILY WAITING FOR ME BACK IN MEXICO.

I AM AFRAID.

I'M

DIFFERENT FROM HIM, CABAL-LERO...!

A WORLD APART..

HE'S...

JOSÉ...

AND ME. ARE WORLDS APART...!

J... JOE YABUKI...

JOE...

YOU STUMBLE AGAIN, EVEN JUST BY A LITTLE, I WON'T HESITATE ANY LONGER.

IF, IN THE NEXT ROUND,

THIS HAS PASSED FAR BEYOND WHAT I CAN TOLERATE...

I'LL BE THROWING THIS ONTO THE RING SO TRY NOT TO THINK BADLY OF ME

AHH-

I'M SORRY BUT COULD YOU PICK UP THAT TOWEL FOR ME?

M-MS. SHIRAKI...

T-THANK YOU, MISS...

N... NO.. HANG IN THERE, YABUKI.

AH-

THERE'RE ONLY A FEW ROUNDS LEFT NOW

TO WITNESS HOW YOU'LL FIGHT THE WORLD'S STRONGEST MAN UNTIL THE VERY LAST MOMENT...!

I'LL BE STANDING HERE WITH BOTH EYES OPEN,

...

WRING EVERY LAST OUNCE OF POWER IN YOUR SPIRIT.. AND FIGHT WITH NO REGRETS!

SO MUSTER UP YOUR STRENGTH AND ATTACK!

M-MS. SHIRAKI. ?

KEEP FIGHTING, YABUKI... I'LL BE HERE WATCHING!

SAY SOMETHING SO RECKLESS...!?

H-HOW... HOW CAN YOU...

DING!

SIGNALLING THE START OF ROUND 13!

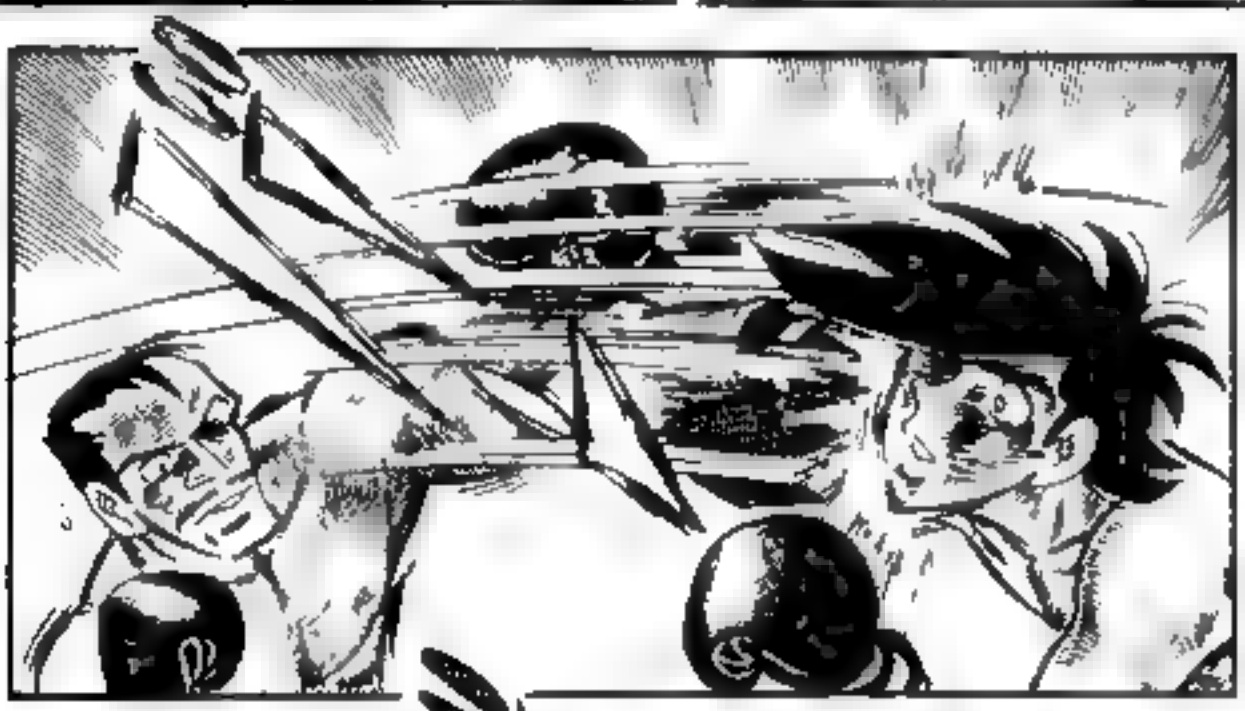
AND THE BELL GOES OFF,

I BELEVE IT'LL BE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO LAST UNTIL THE END..

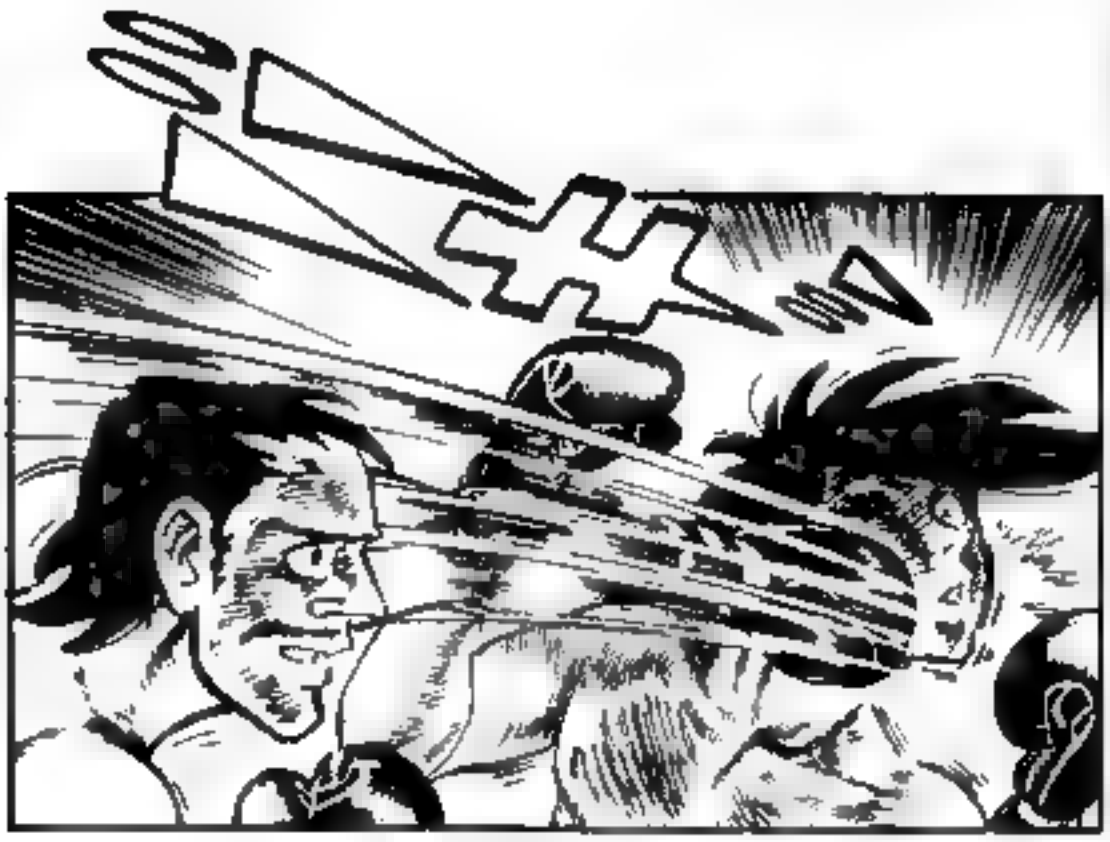
HMM... DESPITE HOW HARD HE MAY TRY...

ONLY THREE ROUNDS LEFT TO GO: 12, 14, AND 15!

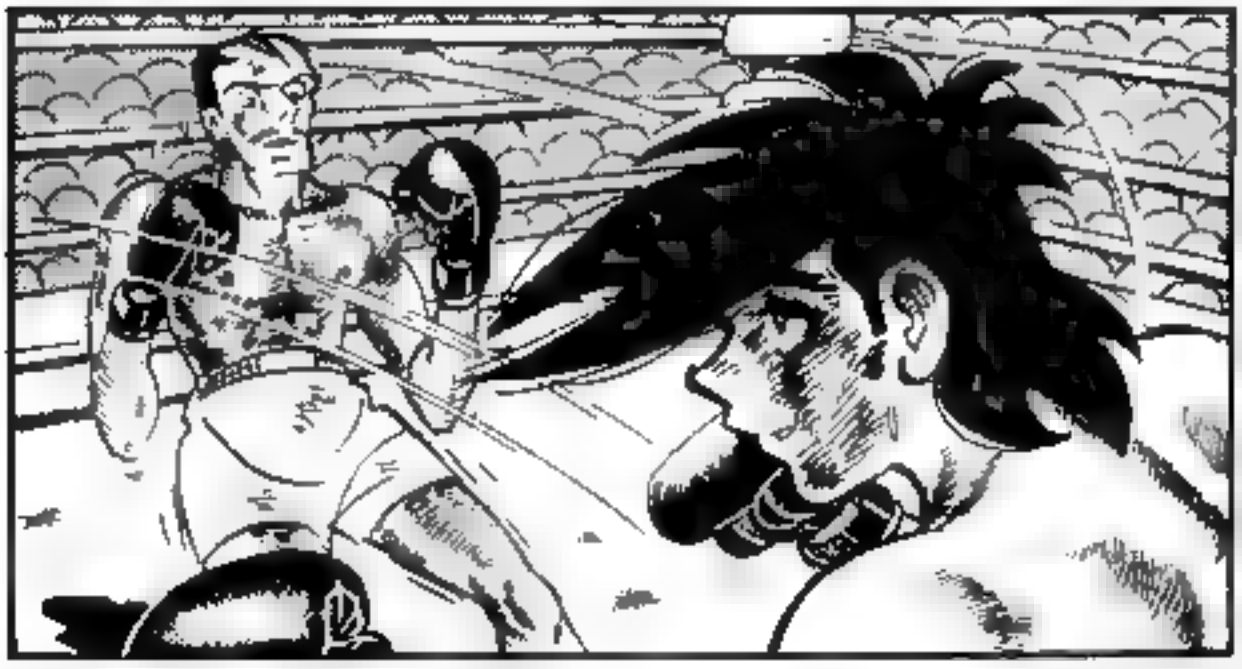
YABUKI COMES OUT FROM HIS CORNER, SHAKING HIS SWOLLEN FACE LEFT AND RIGHT...



HIT HIM BACK! WITH ALL OF YOUR STRENGTH!
YABUKI!



HA...

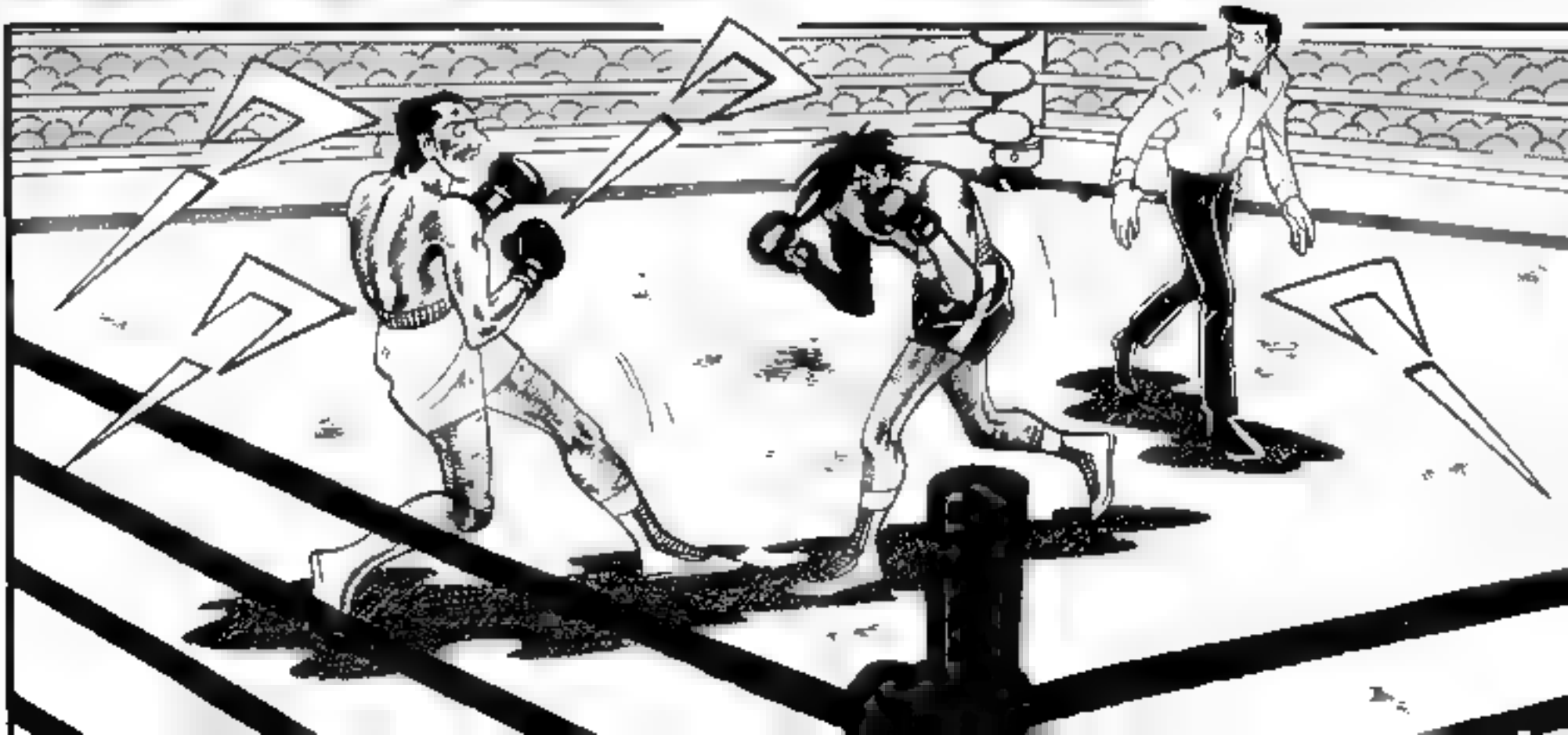


.....

HUFF...
HUFF
HUFF

ドカッ!!

HA...



DON'T FALL BACK! PRESS FORWARD AND ATTAAAACK!

W... WHAT'RE YOU HESITATING FOR, JOSÉ!?

WHAA...?

HUFF

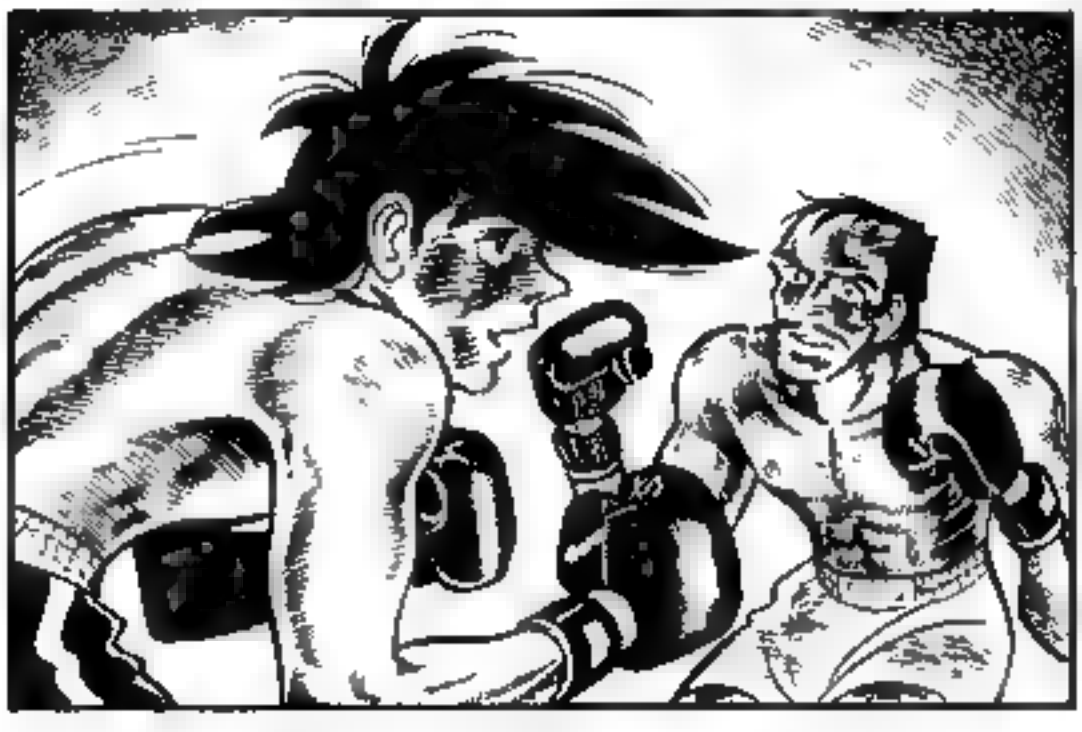
HUFF

HUFF

OLÉ

OLÉ

HUFF
HUFF



HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

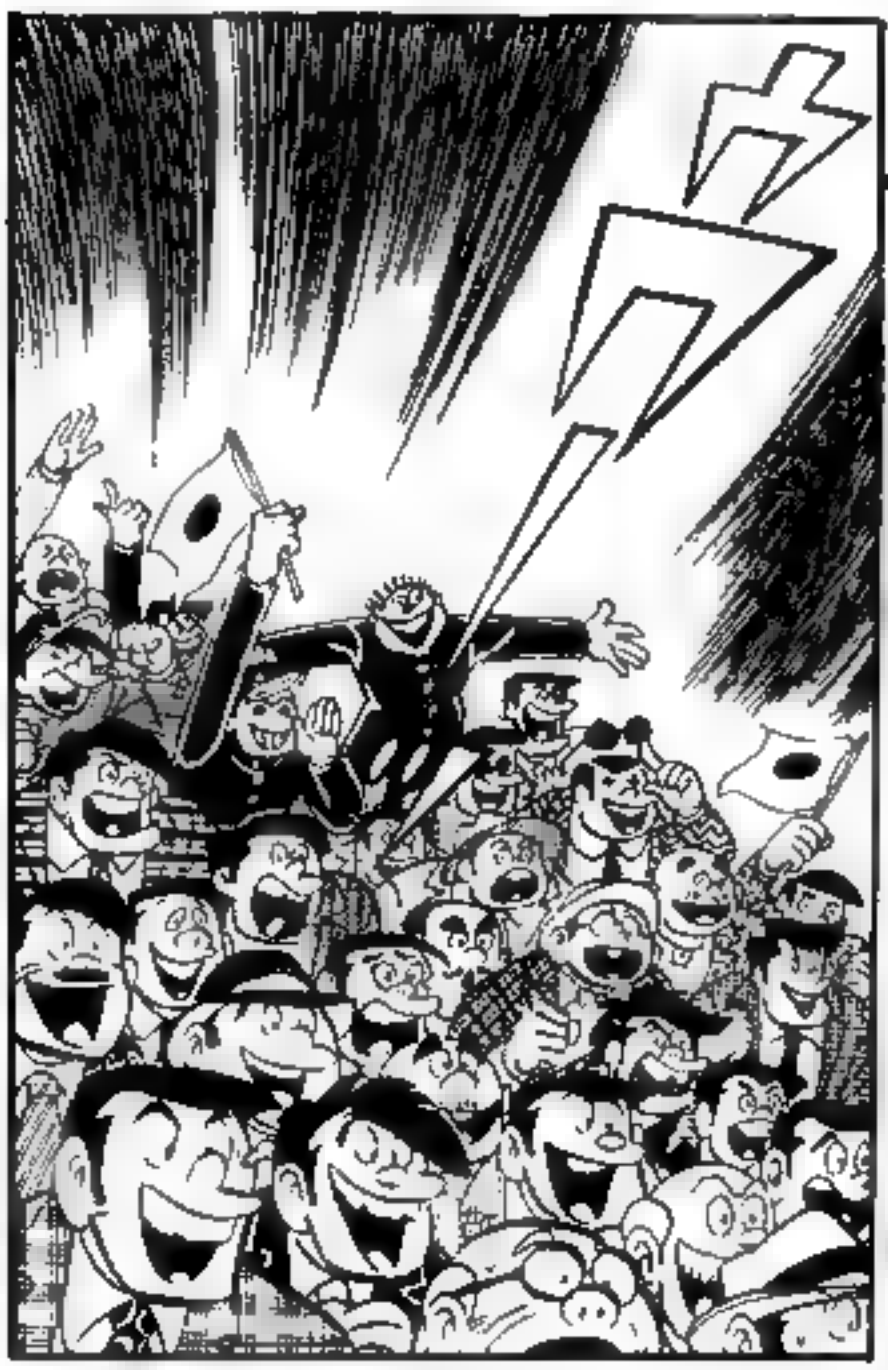
AGHH...

KOKI

UU...

AH..

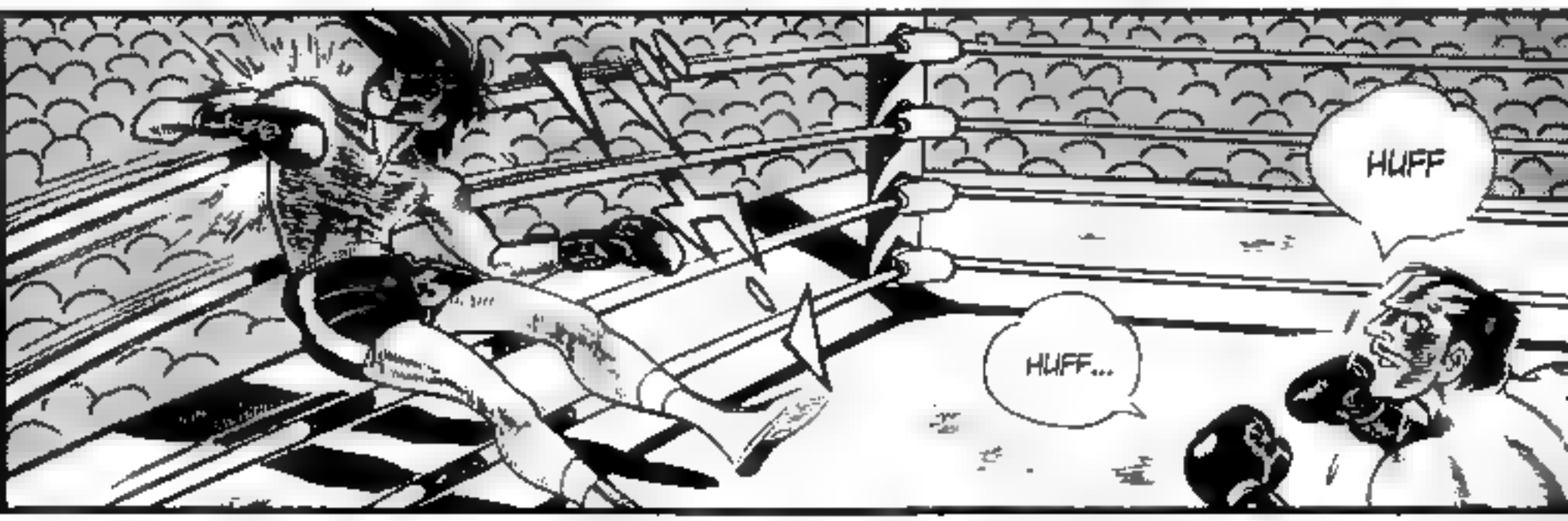
NGHH!



WHERE IS HE DRAWING ALL THAT ENERGY FROM...!?
Y... YEAH, YOU SAID IT! HE'S STILL STUMBLING BUT...
L-LOOK! YABUKI'S STILL GOT PLENTY OF FIGHT LEFT HIM IN!

OHHH!

OOF-


HUFF

HUFF...
HUFF

AGHH-

A...
AGHH...

AGHH...

R... RAGHHHHH!
ARGHHHHHH!

HAHH!

GAHH!

RAHHH!

STAY ON THE ATTACK!

Y-YES!

ARGHH!

T-THAT'S A PENALTY!

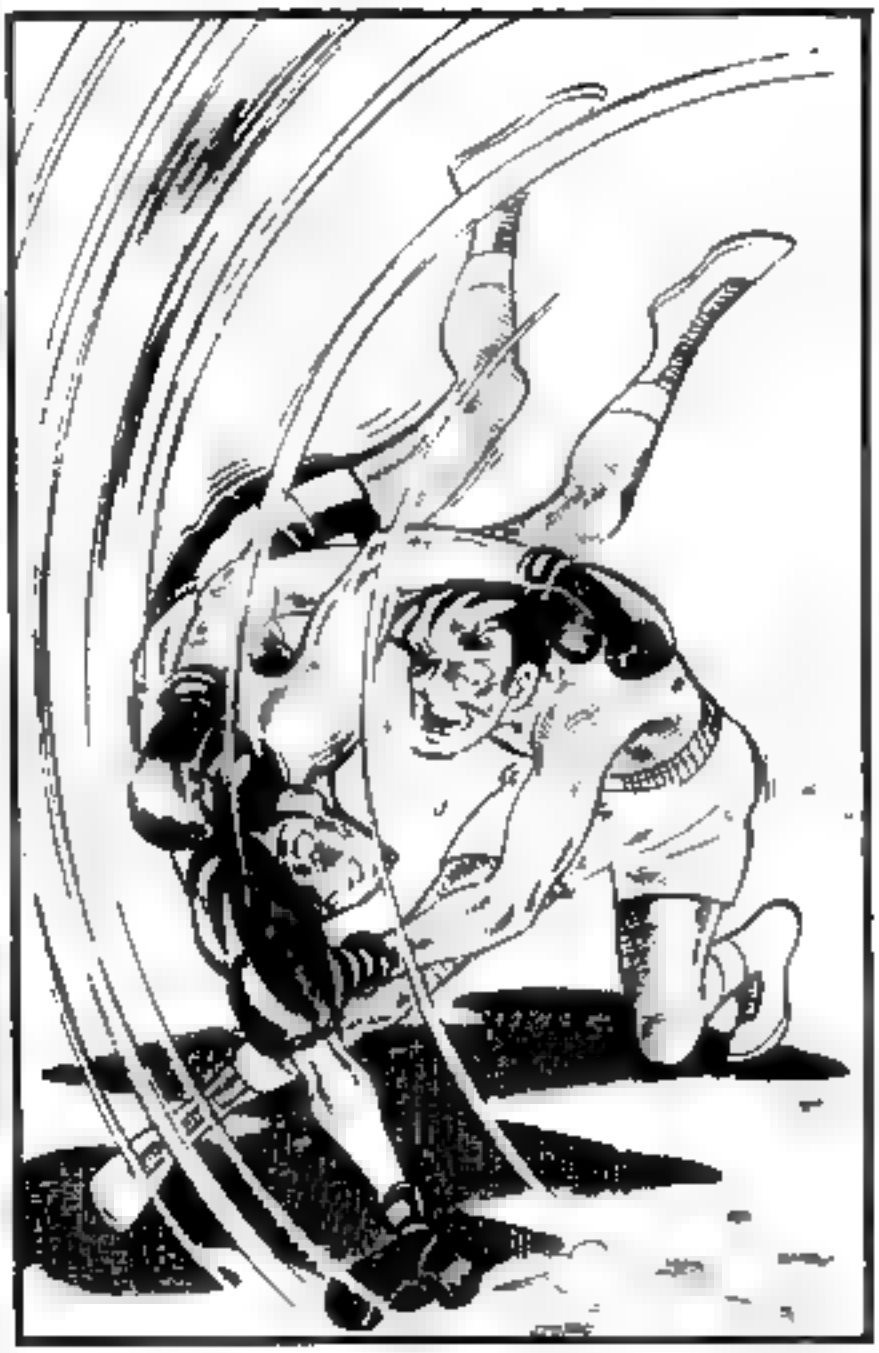
AHH!

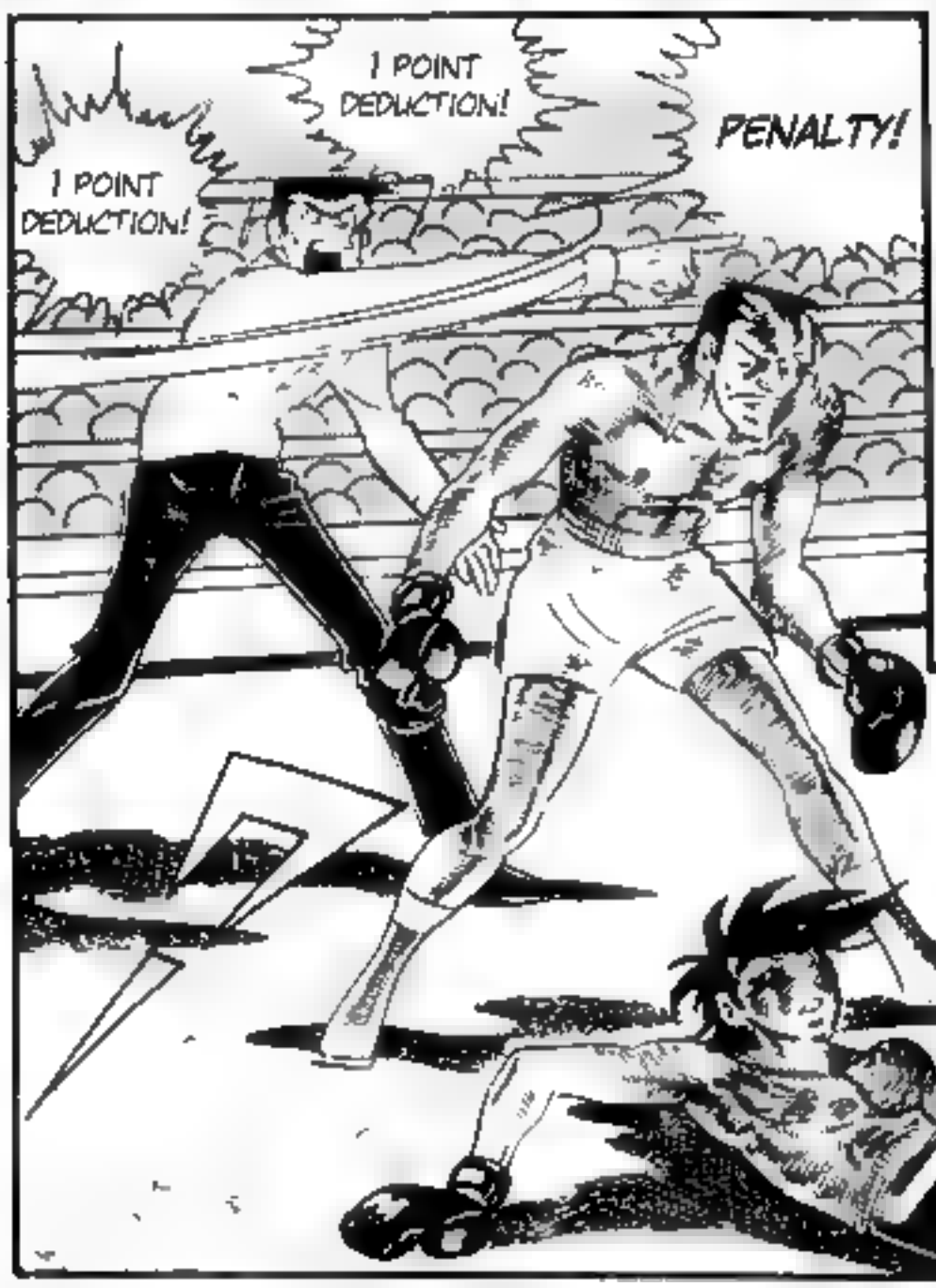
S-STOP!

THAT'S A PENALTY, MENDOZA!

I SAID STOP!

AGHH!




1 POINT DEDUCTION!
1 POINT DEDUCTION!
PENALTY!

ONE POINT... DEDUCTION...
PENAL... TY...

HEY! WHAT THE HELL! YOU THINK YOU CAN FOUL ALL YOU LIKE 'CAUSE YOU'RE THE CHAMP!?

GO TO HELL!

DID YOU LOSE YOUR FREAKIN' MIND!?

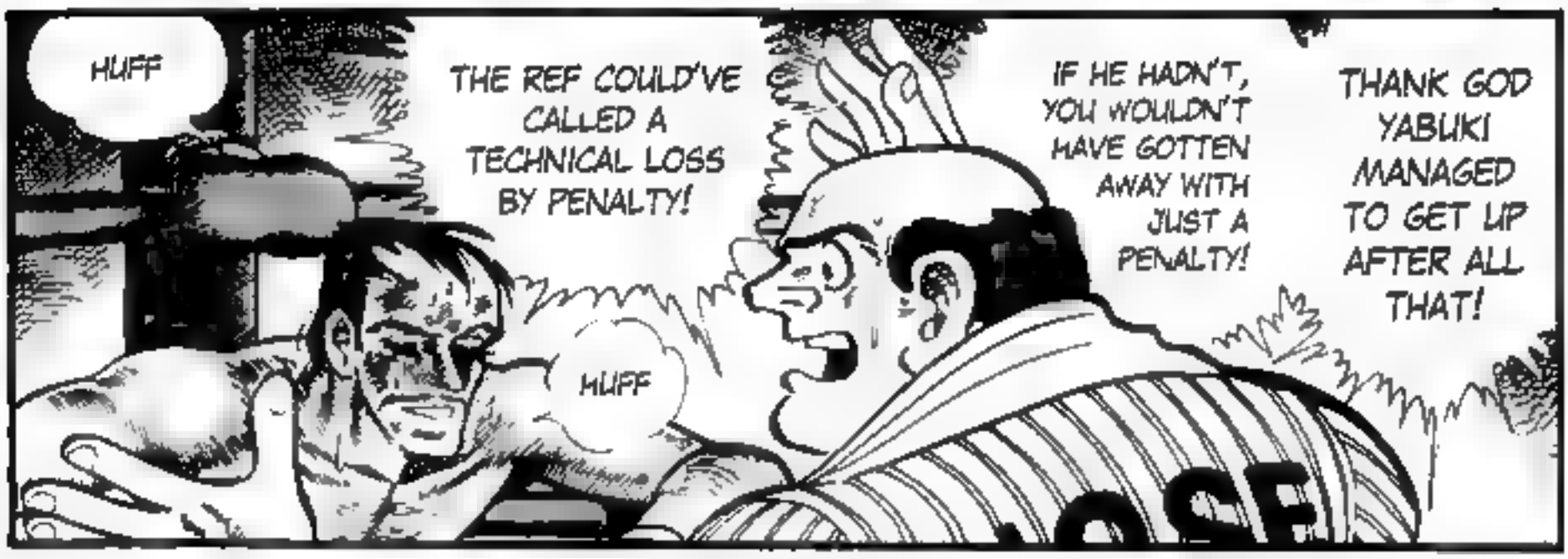
DING!

AGHH...!

PLEASE DO NOT THROW OBJECTS ONTO THE RING!
PLEASE DO NOT THROW OBJECTS ONTO THE RING!

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

WHAT'S WITH ALL THE ASININE PENALTIES!?
W-WHAT HAPPENED, JOSÉ!?


HUFF
THE REF COULD'VE CALLED A TECHNICAL LOSS BY PENALTY!
HUFF
IF HE HADN'T, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN AWAY WITH JUST A PENALTY!
THANK GOD YABUKI MANAGED TO GET UP AFTER ALL THAT!

HUFF...

HUFF.

HUFF.

J-JOSÉ...

JOE YABUKI COULD'VE BEEN HOLDING THE WORLD TITLE-BELT BY NOW IF THAT HAPPENED!

ARE YOU... ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING, JOSÉ!?

THAT DIRTY SON OF A...!

DING!

THAT'S THE END OF ROUND 14!

STOP!

EVEN ON HIS LAST LEGS, HE'S STILL PACKIN' QUITE A PUNCH!

WHAT A GUY!

YABUKI'S STILL GOT IT!

H-HOW'S THAT, MENDOZA!?

THINGS ARE GETTIN' REALLY EXCITING NOW! JUST MAYBE... JUST MAYBE, HE'LL PULL IT OFF!

COUGH!

GULP!

COUGH! COUGH!

HACK!

J-JOSÉ...

HE'S GOT GOOSE-BUMPS ALL OVER...

J-JOSÉ...

...

ARE YOU SICK?

WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU, JOSÉ..?

W... WHAT...

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

JOSÉ..

HE ALWAYS GETS BACK UP.. AND COMES RIGHT AT ME..

NO MATTER HOW MUCH I HIT HIM... NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES HE FALLS DOWN ON THE MAT..

STILL COMING FOR ME...

J.. JOE'S...

STILL STAND UP AFTER ALL THAT...!?

HOW CAN HE...

WHY, CABALLERO...!?

WELL!? DON'T YOU THINK SO TOO, CABALLERO!?

ANY OTHER MAN WHO'S TAKEN THAT MANY PUNCHES FROM ME... WOULD LONG BE CRIPPLED OR DEAD BY NOW...

JOE YABUKI... MUST HAVE ALREADY DIED LONG AGO...

THAT'S RIGHT...

AM I TRAPPED IN A NIGHTMARE...?

OR...

AM I FIGHTING WITH HIS PHANTOM...?

WHO AM I NOW FIGHTING WITH ON THE RING..?

BUT THEN...

AND AS EERY AS THAT MAY BE,

LIKE YOU SAID, JOE YABUKI'S SOMEHOW MANAGING TO STAND BACK UP,

C-CALM DOWN, JOSÉ!

THE IMPORTANT POINT HERE IS THAT YOU'VE DOMINATED FOR MOST OF THIS MATCH!

!IT'S... NOTHING MORE THAN THAT.

SO TOSS AWAY ANY WEIRD THOUGHTS AND JUST GIVE IT YOUR ALL FOR THESE LAST 3 MINUTES!

AND THERE'S ONLY ONE MORE ROUND LEFT!

HOW'RE YOU HOLDING UP?

WELL, JOE?

JOE...

....

STILL NOTHING BUT A BLUR?

HOW'S YOUR RIGHT EYE...?

HE REALLY IS A MYSTERY.

IN SPITE OF ALL THAT BEATING HE'S TAKEN, TOO...

YEAH.

DON'T YOU THINK HE'S BEEN MOVING BETTER AND BETTER SINCE THREE ROUNDS AGO?

COACH...

SO TOO, DOES THE CHAMPION...

YABUKI JOE SLOWLY WALKS OUT

THE BELL RINGS, STARTING THE LAST ROUND!

WHATEVER HAPPENS THIS ROUND... THE RESULT WILL DETERMINE THE ULTIMATE WINNER OF THE WORLD-TITLE!

HE STORMS IN ON YABUKI!

AHH! MENDOZA CHARGES IN!

MENDOZA ATTACKS!

HE THROWS A SERIES OF CORK-SCREW PUNCHES!

OHH! YABUKI ATTACKS TOO!

BOTH FIGHTERS ARE EXCHANGING BLOWS AT THE CENTER OF THE RING TO DETERMINE THE WINNER ONCE AND FOR ALL!

UGH...

YABUKI GOES DOWN!

AHH! YABUKI GOES DOWN!

S-STOP!

STAND UP!

Y... YABUKI!

4!

STAND UP!

5!

STAND UP, YABUKI!

HANG IN THERE!

COME ON, YABUKI!

. . . .

8...

7!

6!

C... CAN YOU STILL FIGHT?

C'MON, YABUKI! GET CLOSER TO HIM! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR COUNTERS!?

F-FIGHT!

SHOW ME THE COUNTERS YOU'RE SO FAMOUS FOR!

A-AIN'T THAT THE WAY YOU USED TO FIGHT BACK IN THE JUVIE BOXING TOURNAMENT?

AOYAMA, LOOK!

AHH!

MY KONNYAKU TACTICS!

Y-YOU'RE RIGHT!

A CROSS COUNTER!

Y-YES, THAT'S IT!

ドカッ

STAND UP!

J-JOSÉ, STAND UP!

BOTH FIGHTERS HAVE GONE DOWN ONCE THIS ROUND!

IT'S JOSÉ MENDOZA WHO GOES DOWN THIS TIME!

MENDOZA IS DOWN!

5!

4!

3!

FIGHT!

NOO...!

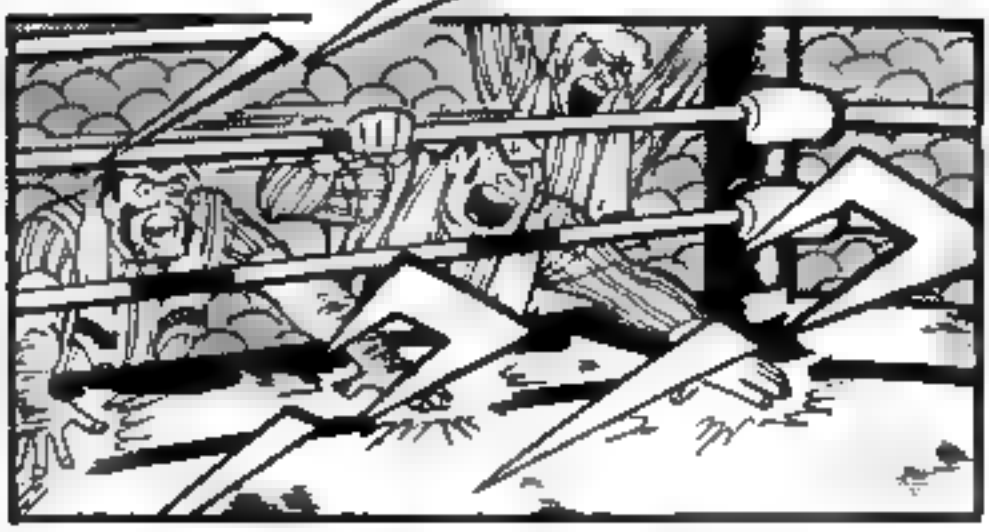
OHHH!

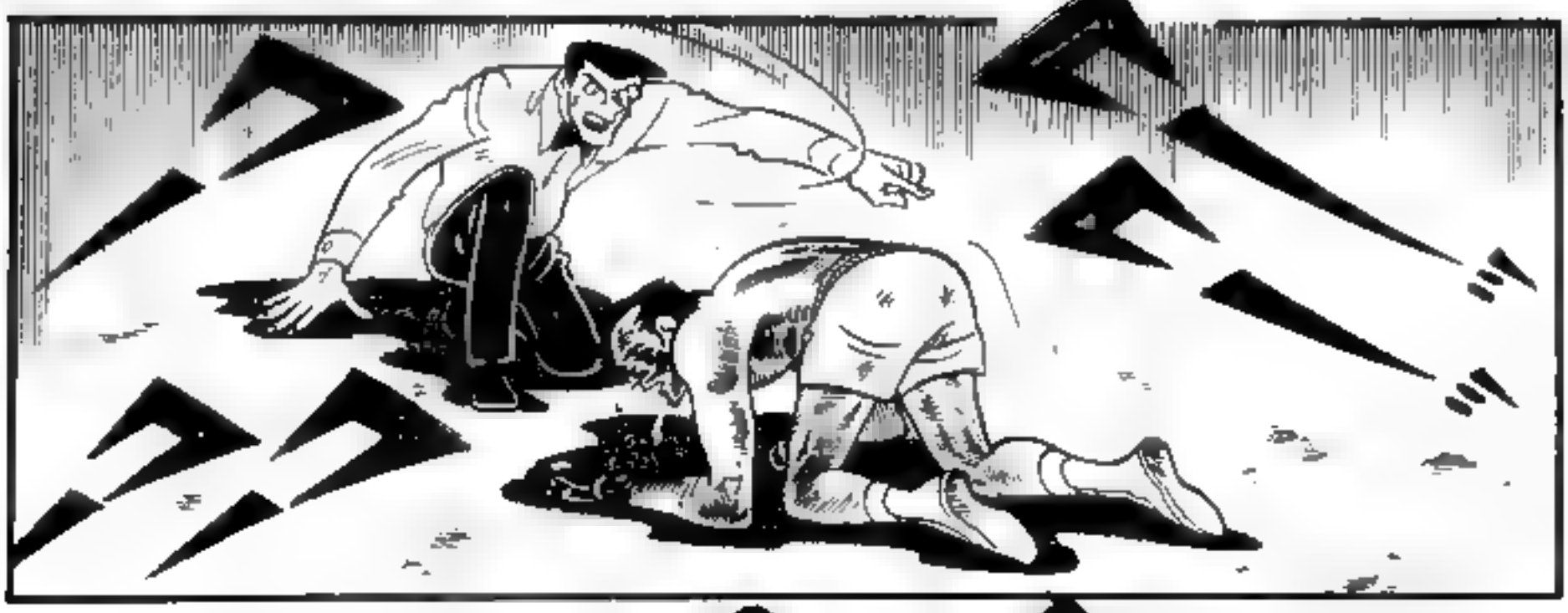
AH-

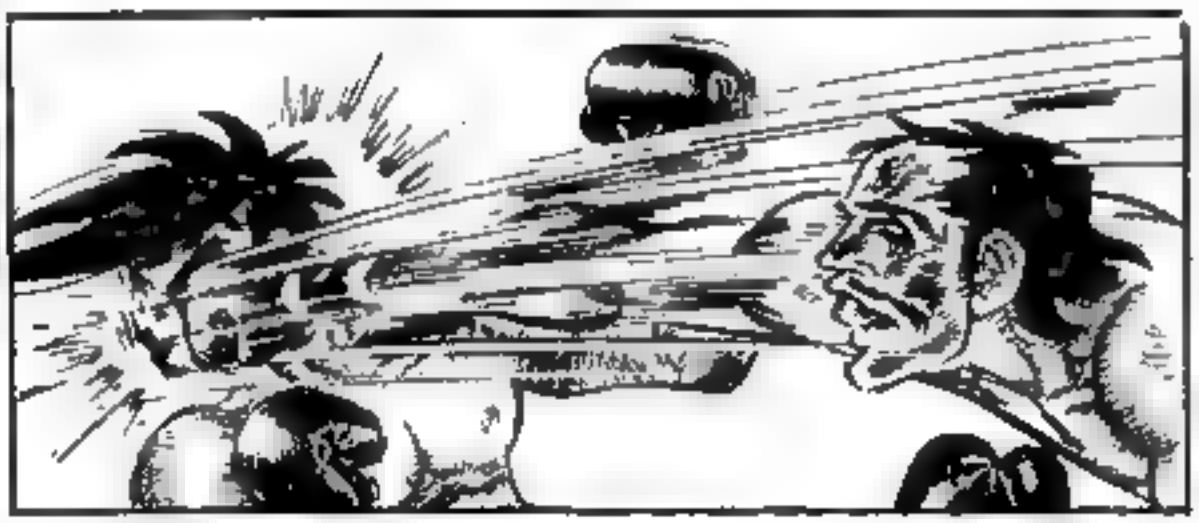
THE TRIPLE CROSS COUNTER!

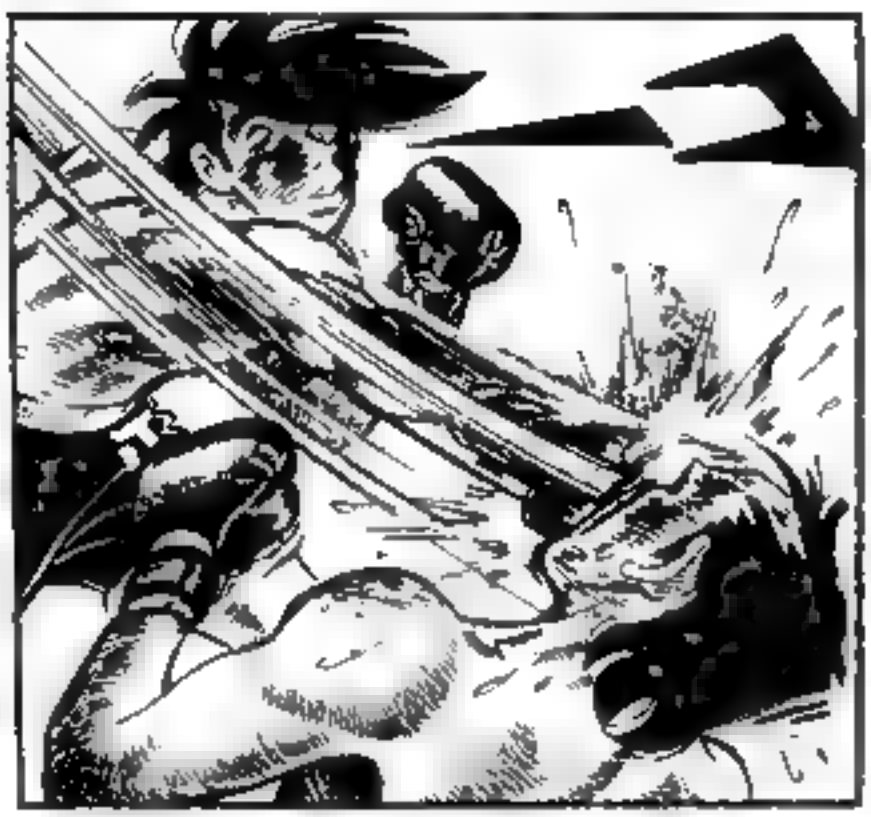
HIS LEG-ENDARY ATTACK!

T-THERE IT IS!









I SAID STOP!

THE MATCH IS OVER!

STOP!

JOSÉ!

IT'S ALL BURNT AWAY...

BURNED...

BURNT TO WHITE ASHES...

THE WINNER WILL BE DECIDED BY THE JUDGES' SCORING!

BUT THIS WILL NOT COUNT AS A DOWN!

JUST A SECOND AFTER THE BELL RANG!

MENDOZA, WHO WAS BARELY HOLDING UP, FALLS DOWN TO HIS KNEES,

T-THE MATCH IS OVER!

JAPAN'S VERY OWN YABUKI HAS FOUGHT SPLENDIDLY! GIVING IT HIS ALL TO THE VERY LAST SECOND, HE HAS LIVED UP TO HIS NICKNAME, BRAWLER JOE!

BUT WHAT AN INTENSE WORLD-TITLE MATCH THESE PAST 15 ROUNDS HAVE BEEN!

OLD MAN.

OLD MAN..

HOW WILL THE DECISION TURN OUT!?

AHH!

WHAT IS IT, JOE?

THE CROWD ARE ON THE EDGE OF THEIR SEAT! THE REF WALKS OVER TO COLLECT THE SCORING CARDS FROM THE JUDGES!

WE'RE MERE MOMENTS AWAY FROM AN ANNOUNCE-MENT!

THE REF HANDS OVER THE JUDGES' SCORING CARDS TO AN OFFICIAL.

AHH! LOOK!

GLOVES OFF, WILL YA?

TAKE THESE...

Y... YES, I'M RIGHT HERE, YABUKI!

ARE YOU THERE?

YOUKO...

I WANT YOU TO KEEP THEM...

I...

HERE. TAKE THESE GLOVES.

A MOMENT OF TENSE SILENCE!

WHO WILL THE WINNER BE!?

THE REFEREE IS ABOUT TO ANNOUNCE THE DECISION.

P... PLEASE LET IT BE JOE...

JOSÉ MENDOZA!

AHH...

DESPITE HIS BEST EFFORTS, JAPAN'S YABUKI LOSES!

OHHH, HOW UNFORTU-NATE!

EVEN THE VERY ENDS OF HIS HAIR HAVE TURNED....

L-LOOK AT MENDOZA'S FACE...

WHOA-

IT SURE WAS CLOSE, WASN'T IT, JOE..

IT...

GOOD...

YOU DID...

NOTHING MORE TO SAY .

I HAVE..

BUT... YOU DID GOOD.

JOE..

TOMORROW'S JOE
あしたのジョー

完

-FIN-

CLEANING: HAPPYSCANS
TRANSLATOR: HOX
TYPESETTERS: ARLES,
CRAZY_HORSE, NETHANDLE

あなたは、この本を読んで、どんな感想をおもちになりましたか。

編集部では、この本についての読者のみなさまのご意見をおまちしています。

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KCスペシャル・既刊

鉄腕アトム
全7集
手塚治虫

正義の味方〝鉄腕アトム〟が、10万馬力のパワーで、地球の平和を乱す悪者たちをやっつける！

仰げば尊し！
全3集
所十三

超カゲキ教師・日向大に率いられた、オチコボレ野球部がマジで〝甲子園〟を目指す！

釣りキチ三平
釣犬ハチ公編
釣りキチ同盟編
矢口高雄

〝釣りキチ三平〟のKCSP未収録作品集。これを読まなきゃ〝釣りキチ〟を読破したとは言えないゾ。

ブレイクショット
全9集
前川たけし

目指せ！　キング・オブ・ハスラー。高校生ハスラー・織田信介が自慢のジャンプショットで大活躍。

ショーグン
SHOGUN
全7集
作・史村翔
画・所十三

上野公園の大将こと緒方晋作が、世界を相手に大活躍！　異色のサクセス・ストーリー。

ザ・スター
THE STAR
①〜⑥
島崎譲

ありったけの情熱と、ひたむきな青春の汗をつめこんだ、優也と秋奈の愛情物語。